University of Alberta

The Ethics of Interpretation in William Blake's *Milton*

by

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Abstract

My thesis argues that William Blake's major prophecy, *Milton*, describes an ethical approach to interpreting others and otherness. Blake's ethical approach advocates the exercise of the imagination in encounters with otherness. The imagination allows one to interpret otherness in the best possible light, and with the other's objectives in mind, thereby increasing the potential for mutual participation in future imaginative production. For Blake, imaginative interpretation is a prolific event capable of producing a revolution. His objective is to liberate individuals from oppression. Blake locates oppression in the reductive frameworks of experience imposed upon the minds and bodies of individuals by the proponents of the Enlightenment. To maintain a manageable scope, I have modelled my study around a close reading of *Milton*. Using this approach, I investigate Blake's critique of the Enlightenment and his ethical solution of an interpretative strategy founded on the imagination.

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This thesis is dedicated with love to my son, Eliot. He is the joy of our lives, and a constant reminder of many blessings – "Sweet joy befall thee!"

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List of Abbreviations

All quotations from William Blake reference *The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake*, newly revised edition, edited by David V. Erdman (1988). For prose citations, the format will be E followed by the page number; for verse, an abbreviation of the relevant book followed by the plate and line number. The books cited are abbreviated as shown:

FR	*The French Revolution* (1791)
VDA	*The Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793)
U	*The [First] Book of Urizen* (1794)
A	*The Book of Ahania* (1795)
M	*Milton, A Poem in 2 Books* (1804-1811)
J	*Jerusalem: The Emanation of The Giant Albion* (1815-1820)

Foreword

In mid-September of 1800, William Blake and his wife Catherine moved from their home in London to a cottage in the village of Felpham in Sussex to work for the author and gentleman, William Hayley[1]. Blake found life in London spiritually and mentally depressing, and could not abide the encouragements of his friends to simply forge ahead with his commercial work. Hayley invited him to move to Felpham in order for them to work more closely together. Although this relocation began with the best of intentions on both sides, Blake eventually felt trapped by Hayley's relentless commissions for miniature portraits and copy-engravings. Hayley, on the one hand, believed it to be his duty "to use every liberal method, in my power, to obtain for [Blake's] industrious ingenuity, the notice and favour of my Countrymen" (qtd. in Bentley 223). Blake, on the other hand, considered his commissioned work as an engraver secondary to his inspired work as a poet and artist. Although this tension did not lead to an outright disassociation, Blake began to assert his independence from Hayley much more strongly, seeking work elsewhere and focussing on his own interests.

Criticism has traditionally viewed the Felpham episode of Blake's life as influential on his writing of *Milton*. Indeed, the problematic relationship between Satan and Palamabron in that poem can be read as descriptive of the acrimonious friendship between Hayley and Blake during that period (see, for example, Bentley 233). Although this interpretation may be helpful as a context historically, I must agree with Northrop Frye, who points out the limitations of this view in his comment that "[w]e shall not get

[1] For details on the Felpham episode of Blake's life, I am indebted to G.E. Bentley, Jr.'s remarkable biography, *The Stranger from Paradise*, and in particular, Chapter VI: "1800-1804: Sweet Felpham and Rex vs Blake," pp. 202-266.

far with *Milton* [...] by reading it as a grotesquely overwritten account of a squabble between a sulky megalomaniac and a conceited dilettante" (327). For the purposes of this study of *Milton*, I am generally not interested in the possible points of intersection between the biographical and the imaginative. Nevertheless, it seems significant that *Milton*, a poem about the ethics of interpreting the actions of others, should have arisen, in part, from such an ordinary experience as deciding how to relate to an overbearing friend.

By this point in his poetic career, Blake was already well into developing his complex personal mythology. He was able to articulate his mythology in several shorter works, such as *The [First] Book of Urizen* and *The Book of Ahania*. In 1797, he had also begun work on his most ambitious poem, the (ultimately unfinished) long epic prophecy, *Vala*, which he later called *The Four Zoas*. This poem revolves around Blake's central myth of the fallen Eternal, Albion. Albion represents "the aggregate of spirits we call mankind or humanity" (Frye 44). He falls from Eternity because he allows his jealousy to cloud the Divine Vision (Damon 9), choosing instead to act upon his own selfish desires. This decision causes him to fall into a deep sleep representing the limitation of Albion's senses. In Eternity, the rational, imaginative, sensual, and erotic aspects of humanity are not distinct; Albion's sleep shatters this wholeness by introducing the will to domination. Each aspect of his being now rivals all of the others for control of the human faculties. Only by casting off his selfishness can Albion be returned to wholeness. Blake contextualizes this myth in *Milton* by describing the descent of John Milton from Eternity as a revolutionary act of redemption. In his willingness to cast off his Selfhood, Milton has the opportunity to awaken Albion from his egotistic slumber, and thus to redeem him.

At the heart of this poem, then, is the question of what it means to act in relation to others. It is from this site of inquiry that I begin my investigation of Blake's ethics of interpretation. Ethics is not a homogeneous term by any means; however, I believe that the approach to experience that I detect in Blake's narrative can be identified as an ethics for at least two reasons. First, *Milton* is a poem concerned with the matter of how one ought to relate to others, living or dead. Milton's poetic legacy, Blake argues, carries with it the traces of an oppressive impulse. In *Paradise Lost*, for example, Blake sees evidence of poetic inspiration snuffed out by a willing submission to Christian orthodoxy. Milton's decision to return to earth in repentance is thus a daring invitation for those who are aware of his past wrongs to judge him by a different standard. Hence the second reason that this investigation of Blake's poem constitutes an ethics: *Milton* is a description of the search for the good life with and for others. As I describe in greater detail in the first and third chapters, especially, the good life, for Blake, is the free exercise of the imagination. To participate in that freedom is inextricable from a certain kind of relationship with others. Thus, when Los – the character who represents the imagination – sees Milton descend to earth, he is able to restrain his fear and anxiety by imagining an ancient prophecy about Milton as the long-awaited awakener of Albion. He has chosen to participate in the life of another, Milton, by interpreting the poet's actions with openness to the range of Milton's potential motivations.

Interpretation therefore becomes a vehicle for ethical action, and can be deployed either imaginatively or reductively. As I find in Blake's descriptions of the process, interpretation involves a twofold activity: first, the observation of an object, and, second, the expression of that observation. An observation may take the form of an exercise of

the senses, such as in listening or in seeing. An expression constitutes the description of the interpreting subject's relationship to that object. Thus Los observes Milton's descent and considers the different significations of such an act. He then expresses his observation by stating that he has suddenly recollected an ancient prophecy that foresees just such an event as a signal of the apocalypse. This is an example of imaginative interpretation because it results in an increased potential for further interpretations. By orienting himself openly towards the otherness with which Milton presents him, Los makes a movement in the direction of freedom. Reductive interpretation, by contrast, involves the tendency to reduce the other to the same; that is, to diminish (or ignore) the other's otherness for the sake of advancing oneself. As I describe at greatest length in the second chapter, Blake notices a link between the reductive approaches to experience found in Milton's writings and similar reductive frameworks advanced by proponents of the Enlightenment. Blake's critique of the Enlightenment, in addition to the central problem of defining his ethical approach, is the other major line of inquiry in my thesis.

Critical discussion of *Milton* has often focussed on deciphering the structure of the poem in order to reveal its repeated "fundamental pattern of prophetic awakening and descent" (Cooper 90). Deciding the purpose of this pattern represents the main point of divergence in critical opinion. With reference to my own thesis, two studies have been of particular significance. First, Paul Youngquist's article emphasizing the important role that human experience plays in *Milton* towards developing a hermeneutic of the other, offers a reading of *Milton* that parallels my own prioritization of interpretation in the poem. Second, the discussion initiated by John H. Jones, in which he reads Blake's Prophecies using Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogue, has proven particularly helpful in

my considerations of the relation between subjectivity and inspiration. Moreover, his description of "self-annihilation" as the "embracement of dialogue" (4) emphasizes, by contrast, the "coercive authority implicit in Selfhood" (5). My thesis builds on these meditations by conceiving of Blake's notions of interpretation and self-annihilation as a kind of ethical approach defined historically as an imaginative critique of Enlightenment thinking. Although some critics have cautioned against such a reading (e.g., McGann 10), ethics, as I have defined it, should not be construed as synonymous with Blake's notion of the "Moral Law." Instead of constructing a new system of oppression, the ethics of interpretation in *Milton* describes the self's relationship with the other as a mutual pursuit of imaginative freedom. An important book that provides a much more comprehensive analysis of William Blake's ethical commitments, with particular reference to his biography, is Jeanne Moskal's *Blake, Ethics, and Forgiveness*. Although I consider my thesis to be distinct from that study in my specific focus on Blake's use of interpretation as a vehicle for ethical action, I am indebted to Moskal's conceptual approach, and especially her analysis of Blake's ethics of the other.

To maintain a manageable scope, I have modelled my study around a close reading of *Milton*. Chapter 1 focusses on the poem's opening Bard's song and Milton's response. The Bard's song tells the story of the fall of Satan from Eternity as a case of selfish behaviour on all sides, culminating with a miscarriage of justice. Milton's response to the song is to repent of his own selfish decisions, and to descend to earth in order to purge himself of the still-present tyrannical impulse. This chapter introduces the chief lines of inquiry in my thesis, including Blake's critique of the Enlightenment and his formulation of an ethical approach to interpretation.

In Chapter 2, I analyze the poem's account of Milton's journey from Eternity to his meeting with William Blake, and their subsequent encounter with Los and his sons. This chapter explores in greater depth the nature of Blake's concerns over the Enlightenment project, which is my term for the reductive culture that emerges from the effect of Enlightenment thinking on art, politics, justice, and society in general. To enhance my investigation of Blake's thought, I draw upon the critique of Enlightenment advanced by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. These theorists provide a useful vocabulary for discussing the reductive tendencies of the Enlightenment. Blake's heightened awareness of the socio-political implications of reductive rationalism foresees the work of these later writers, who also recognize the effects of systematization on human culture and the value of art as a site of resistance.

Finally, in Chapter 3, I return expressly to the task of defining Blake's ethics through a close reading of *Milton*, Book the Second. This book recounts the descent of Milton's Emanation, Ololon, from Eternity in pursuit of Milton. My analysis reveals the unique nature of Blake's conception of subjectivity; namely, as a community of voices engaged in intellectual activity within a single individual. Against this conversational subjectivity is pitted the inspirational object: the other that demands openness and imagination in its interpretation. As Ololon's final discourse with Milton reveals, the interplay between subject and object can provide the grounds for redemption, which is the availing of imaginative freedom, or the realization of the ethical aim.

Chapter I

"What Mov'd Milton": Imaginative Interpretation as Ethical Activity

This chapter argues that the first section of *Milton*, which includes the poem's preface, the Bard's song, and an account of Milton's departure from Eternity, acts as a model for the subsequent events of the poem. I make this case primarily through a close reading of the section, out of which emerges an analysis of William Blake's two major lines of inquiry in *Milton*. The first investigation considers how the Enlightenment has succeeded in limiting the interpretative faculties of individuals through its manifestations in politics, religion, and art. I wish temporarily to define Enlightenment thinking as a strain of rationalism emerging beginning in the early seventeenth century, which interprets the world by limiting experiential possibilities. Enlightenment begins from a standpoint of autonomous reason, and produces a system against which experience is compared. Aspects of experience will either be incorporable to this system or deemed irrational. Another helpful description of what I call "the Enlightenment project" is found in John Howard's study of *Milton*, where he describes the objects of Blake's attack as "the rational, scientific, and in some cases, skeptical energies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (19). I will develop my description of Enlightenment thinking and its consequences considerably in the second chapter. The second line of inquiry represents Blake's solution to this perceived problem: the unfettered exercise of the imagination as an orientation towards ethical engagement with the world. As I discuss in the third section of this chapter, such an ethical engagement constitutes striving for the

good life for oneself and for others. The good life is precisely this freedom to participate in imaginative activity without restrictions imposed by external forces.

This chapter explores these lines of inquiry by considering how the use of John Milton as the protagonist in the poem develops each concern. First, Blake's critique of Milton as "a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it" (E 35) represents his broader concerns about the Enlightenment project. The Bard's song will be especially helpful in developing this critique, since it is the event that prompts Milton's resolution to act. This resolution and its consequences in the remainder of the section correspond to the second line of inquiry. Milton's response defines the framework for Blake's ethics in its expression of the potentially ethical relationship between art, interpretation, and action. The two succeeding chapters will each address one of these lines of inquiry, as it manifests itself in greater depth in the remainder of the poem.

1.

The opening lines of the preface to *Milton* herald a New Age in which "all will be set right: & those Grand Works of the more ancient & consciously & professedly Inspired Men, will hold their proper rank" (E 95). The image of the New Age haunts the poem as an imminent future for both the characters and the narrative. Opposing the New Age is the current, fallen state of the world. The revolutionary catalyst joining these two modes of existence represents an imaginative intervention. This dynamic of the resistance to the fallen state and the reorientation towards the New Age, made possible through the work of the imagination, persists throughout the poem. From Blake's promise early in *Milton* that he "will not cease from Mental Fight [...] Till we have built Jerusalem" (E 95-96) to

the close of the poem, in which the creatures of the earth "are prepard in all their strength / To go forth to the Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations" (M 43:1), Blake uses the dynamic as a structure. Its images of preparation, struggle, production, and construction draw a boundary between the present reality and the apocalyptic approach of the New Age. Blake epitomizes this movement towards the precipice of revolution in the central narrative of Milton's departure from Eternity. In prompting Milton's act, the Bard's song reveals its intervening role in bringing about the New Age. As the Bard himself repeats: "Mark well my words! they are of your eternal salvation" (M 2:25 *passim*).

The Bard's song opens with a retelling of Blake's creation myth. In terms of its place in the chronology of Blake's myth, the Bard's song in *Milton* begins after "Albion was slain upon his Mountains / And in his Tent, thro envy of Living Form" (M 3:1-2). The context of Albion's fall involves a breakdown in the productive intellectual fury that defines Eternity. As Northrop Frye writes, "[o]nce he takes the fatal step of thinking the object-world independent of him, Albion sinks into a sleep symbolizing the passivity of his mind" (126). For his imagery in the Bard's song, Blake borrows extensively from one of his previous poems, *The* [*First*] *Book of Urizen*. This poem, which Harold Bloom calls "an intellectual satire" of the "accounts of cosmic and human genesis" (906), describes the rebellion of Urizen against Eternity and his subsequent exile to earth, which culminates in the creation of the material world. While it covers similar ground as the Bard, *The Book of Urizen* explores the Creation and its consequences in far greater depth. Its scope includes descriptions of the development of emotions such as mourning, pity, and love; the birth of the revolutionary spirit; and the beginning of organized religion. The Bard's song, by contrast, focusses specifically on Los's intervention in Urizen's

exile, in which he rescues Urizen from descending further into indefiniteness by giving him a physical form. The creation myth, as the Bard tells it, emphasizes the objectification of the world. Yet prior to this objectification, "the earth was without form, and void" (Gen. 1:2). The Bard, for example, describes creation as taking place "Among indefinite Druid rocks & snows of doubt & reasoning" (M 3:8). Although this vagueness is an alternative to the objectifying breakdown of Eternity, the "indefinite" is even more problematic than the boundedness of the separated subject and object in the world after the fall of Albion. An "indefinite" image does not arise out of the exercise of the imagination; rather, it results from an attempt to infer the particular from the general. To enact such a judgment necessitates the construction and application of distinct frameworks for interpretation. These frameworks systematize and categorize experience, but do not reveal their inner workings to the perceiver. Rather, they are imposed as norms by the dominant forces of society – in the Church, government, and other institutions. Blake describes this project of domination in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, for example, when he speaks of how "a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract mental dieties [sic] from their objects" (E 38).

In an attempt to salvage this world as a possible site for the imagination, Los intervenes. Labouring "at his resolute Anvil" (M 3:7), Los provides a striking contrast to the other god (or, more precisely, Zoa) mentioned, Urizen, whom the Bard describes as lying "in darkness & solitude, in chains of the mind lock'd up" (M 3:6). While Urizen suffers from intellectual impotency, Los embarks upon an active and directed task. Yet the creative work is not entirely redemptive. Indeed, as S. Foster Damon writes,

"Creation is error" because "[t]he process of Creation is one of dividing up the original Unity" (94). The seven stanzas that describe Los's work each end with a refrain that corroborate this perspective, describing each age that has "passed over" as "a state of dismal woe" (M 3:10, *passim*), an ironic contrast to the perhaps overly optimistic assessment of Creation in the Biblical story.

The terrifying process of creating form out of resistant indefiniteness does not therefore result in a return to the wholeness of Eternity. Instead, the Creation involves the development of the five *divided* senses: "orbs of vision," "Two Ears," "Two Nostrils," "a Tongue of hunger & thirst," and arms and feet. Throughout his corpus, Blake uses the concept of "the five senses" derisively. As the goddess Oothoon says in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, echoing the imagery Blake uses in the *Milton* description of Creation:

> They told me that I had five senses to inclose me up.
> And they inclos'd my infinite brain into a narrow circle.
> And sunk my heart into the Abyss, a red round globe hot burning
> Till all from life I was obliterated and erased. (VDA 2:31-34)

For Blake, the very idea of "the *five* senses" is limiting – it is a needless reduction of human experience. Deployed prophetically, by contrast, the senses can deepen the exercise of the imagination. As Isaiah says to the narrator of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, "I saw no God. nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the infinite in every thing" (E 38). Not only does this statement expand the possibility of the "senses," when taken with Oothoon's plea that "[t]hey told me that I had five senses," it also suggests a more sinister subtext to the concept of "a finite

organical perception." The idea of "the five senses," Blake suggests, is not without a philosophical context. Instead, the idea has become lodged in the faculties of perception, significantly limiting and restricting the imagination. Tracing the history of the violent grafting of abstract thought onto human experience returns this present study to its concern over the relation between tyranny and Enlightenment. For, although Blake does not make an explicit connection in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, the "they" responsible for limiting Oothoon's imaginative faculties are the theoreticians of the Enlightenment, and targets of repeat attacks throughout Blake's work: Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Voltaire[2].

Nevertheless, Los's creative intervention is an improvement to the indefiniteness that precedes it. Despite its divisiveness, creation is still "an act of mercy" (E 563), which can stay the advance of abstraction by offering contingent form to the indefinite. The ideal, which is Eternity and the permanent, integrated world of the imagination, is impossible at this restricted level of existence, which Blake usually calls "Generation." Blake sums up this distinction when he writes that "There Exist in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see reflected in this Vegetable Glass of Nature" (E 555). This statement is not an appeal to the Platonic world of ideas, but a description of the entwined relationship Blake envisions between the physical world and the world of the imagination. The world of Generation is characterized by ephemerality and transience; that is, it is always subject to time and space. Yet, despite these qualities

[2] Cp. Kroeber, who, writing about Blake's expansion in *Jerusalem* of this critique of the Enlightenment, remarks that the reason "Blake identifies as his chief enemies neither religious nor political leaders, but intellectuals" is that "[i]t is the modern intellectual who most effectively conceals, especially from himself, the irrational foundation of his activities" (367). In his entry on "Bacon," S. Foster Damon notes, "In Blake's symbolic system, Bacon is the first of the trinity of Bacon, Newton, and Locke, who were responsible for the materialism of modern times" (35). Blake felt that the ideas of such men had to be "cast off" (M 41:5) in order to free people to exercise their imaginations unencumbered by reductive systems of thought.

and its propensity towards abstraction, Generation can be a reflection of Eternity if one chooses to interpret it that way. As I examine in greater depth in the third chapter, Blake makes this interpretative orientation available to his readers by locating Eternity, from the perspective of the material world, in the moments and spaces that define physical human existence: the pulsation of an artery and a globule of blood. Blake's famous appeal "To see a World in a Grain of Sand" (E 490) illustrates precisely the conditions under which a relationship is possible between the material world and "those Worlds of Eternity," found in the imagination. Succinctly, what is required for orienting oneself towards Eternity, as Blake repeats later in *Auguries of Innocence*, is to see "Thro the Eye" (E 492). This perceptive capacity forms the basis for imaginative interpretation.

According to Frye, Blake anticipates this perceptive capacity as emerging from one of two activities: "[l]ove, or the transformation of the objective into the beloved, and art, or the transformation of the objective into the created" (126). In both cases, when these activities are described in terms of interpretative acts, the figure of the imaginative interpreter emerges as central. The one who interprets in love perceives the other from the perspective of seeking the achievement of the other's objectives. The self then communicates that perception to the other through sexual expression. Likewise, the artist-as-interpreter perceives the world as having its own ends, and communicates this perception through the work of art, which represents a mingling of objectives without a reduction one way or another. For both love and art, the perception that effects the transformation represents an exertion of the imagination. As becomes clear in Frye's explanation, love and art each attempt to bridge the gap between the subject and the object, created in Los's last-ditch attempt to halt a descent into total abstraction.

Enlightenment thinking circumvents this work of Los by appealing to reason at the expense of the rest of human experience. This moves in the opposite direction from imaginative interpretation, away from the active and communal qualities that describe Eternity, and towards Ulro, a world in which reductive interpretation is deployed as a passive acquiescence to the dictates of tyranny.

Blake describes these two opposing approaches to interpretation – imaginative and reductive – in the Bard's story of Satan and Palamabron. This account pivots around Satan's dissatisfaction with his designated task. As a son of Los, Satan oversees the operations of one aspect of the creation process. Specifically, his job is to supervise the work of the mills, which symbolize "Reason working on the ideas furnished by the Imagination" (Damon 273). Satan is well aware of the fact that his task is less prestigious than the task of his brother, Palamabron, who operates the harrow. The harrow, which follows Los's plough, is an active participant in imaginative production. Satan, envious of his brother's position, attempts to manipulate Los and Palamabron into letting him operate the harrow instead of his mills. Palamabron finally relents, though selfishly, out of a desire to preserve his reputation. The result is disastrous, as Satan causes the horses of the harrow to go mad, and Palamabron – taking Satan's place – gets the servants of the mill drunk. Neither one is at all suitable for the other's position. Los attempts to rectify the situation by ordering all of the workers of the imagination to cease working for the remainder of the day. Unfortunately, both Satan and Palamabron are unwilling to forgive each other, and each one attempts to exact revenge through underhanded methods. Finally, Palamabron calls down the Great Assembly of the Eternals to pass judgment. The end result of this impromptu court session is a disastrous miscarriage of justice

carried out against Satan. He is furious, and declares his autonomy from the Divine Family, thereby exiling himself to Ulro, which represents the abstraction and Selfhood that underpin the workings of the material world.

From the beginning, Satan shows a resemblance to Urizen that will continue throughout the Bard's song. As Harold Bloom points out, eventually, "[t]he Great Harvest will reveal Satan as Urizen" (910). To underscore their connection, Blake describes Urizen and Satan using similar terms. For example, both characters are portrayed as "Refusing Form" (M 3:10, for Urizen; M 3:41, for Satan); likewise, both their refusals are made in vain. Urizen becomes enslaved to the five senses, so that he is described as lying "in chains of the mind lock'd up" (M 3:6). Satan, despite his protests, becomes "The Miller of Eternity made subservient to the Great Harvest" (M 3:42). In this capacity, Satan becomes a figure of reduction. This enforced subservience angers Satan and leads to a conversation with his father, Los. Los tells Satan, "If you account it Wisdom when you are angry to be silent, and / Not to shew it: I do not account that Wisdom but Folly" (M 4:6-7). Satan's response to the situation in which he finds himself is passive and emotional repression. Attempting to encourage Satan to respond differently, Los reminds him that he is "Prince of the Starry Hosts," "Newtons Pantocrator weaving the Woof of Locke," and that "To Mortals thy Mills seem every thing" (M 4:9, 11, 12). These descriptions are meant to inspire Satan to respond imaginatively to his situation.

In contrast to his "mild" son, Los works actively to come to terms with his own limitations acquired as a result of his creative intervention. Blake describes how, in creating Urizen, Los's "immortal limbs / Grew deadly pale" and "he became what he

beheld" (M 3:28-29); that is, by imposing form upon the world, Los simultaneously creates an ego for himself. Yet this terrifying and upsetting effect of Creation does not stop Los from his work. This is made especially clear from Blake's repeated use of the gerund to align Los-as-subject explicitly with activity: "Within *labouring. beholding* Without: from Particulars to Generals / *Subduing* his Spectre, they Builded the Looms of Generation / They Builded Great Golgonooza" (M 3:37-39, emphasis mine). Out of his continued resolution arises Los's admonishment to Satan that he "Get to thy Labours at the Mills & leave me to my wrath" (M 4:14). These words reflect his wrath, which Damon identifies in Blake with revolution and "a reaction against the past" (452), and contrast notably with Satan's blubbering response. Where "Los roll'd his loud thunders" in anger (M 4:15), "Satan trembling obeyd weeping along the way" (M 4:19). Los exemplifies activity, while Satan chooses passivity.

This distinction is further underscored in Satan's dealings with Palamabron. This other son of Los is introduced in the poem hard at work "with the fiery Harrow" (M 5:1). In contrast, Blake describes Satan as having "fainted beneath the artillery" (M 5:2). These images of activity, on the one hand, and passivity, on the other, are finally compared to Christ who "took on Sin in the Virgins Womb, & put it off on the Cross" (M 5:3). Bloom argues that this comparison to Christ especially censures Satan because "he has not sacrificed self as Christ did in his sacrifice" (911). Even more overt, however, is the association of activity with Christ ("took on" and "put it off"), and, especially, activity in an undesirable context. According to Frye's reading of Blake, "[e]verything [Christ] did was an imaginative act bringing more abundant life, and his whole gospel reduces itself

to the forgiveness of sins" (79). The forgiveness of sins[3] for Blake requires that we learn "to distinguish the Eternal Human [...] from those States or Worlds in which the Spirit travels" (J 49:72-74). Jeanne Moskal helps explicate Blake's approach by defining forgiveness as "*what* was done is forgiven for the sake of *who* did it" (7, emphasis original). While I explore the significance of this practice of distinguishing between individuals and states in Chapter 3, for now it is sufficient to note that Christ's self-sacrificial response to sin is imaginative interpretation to a revolutionary degree. Palamabron, in his commitment to activity, has the potential to make this same kind of response. Satan, by contrast, operates with such "incomparable mildness," which is a euphemism for passivity, that forgiveness, let alone the discernment it necessitates, would be impossible for him. As the "Reasoning Negative" (M 5:14), Satan remains in an ongoing state of lack, which is an appropriate condition for a practitioner of reductive interpretation.

Satan's response to his undesirable position in "Eternal Death" falls far short of a deployment of the imagination. Indeed, his response represents an exercise of precisely the reductive interpretation that Blake resists. This response begins with Satan's continued pestering of Los, whom "with most endearing love / He soft intreated [...] to give to him Palamabrons station" (M 7:5-6). In his "repeated offers and repeated intreaties" (M 7:9), Satan points out how "Palamabron returnd with labour wearied every evening" (M 7:8). Not only does his proposal interpret Palamabron's fatigue reductively as weakness, it suggests that Satan is more capable than Palamabron without saying so

[3] For the purposes of my thesis, I will not delve into the nuances of Blake's notions of forgiveness, except to point to Moskal's study, in which she comments that "Blake's poem *Milton* arises from a complex, multiply-determined life situation in which imperatives to intersubjective and intrapsychic forgiveness overlap and muddy each other" (86).

directly, representing a return to the indefinite. This suggestive approach is detestable to Blake, and Palamabron voices this disgust when he describes "Satans mildness and his self-imposition, / Seeming a brother, being a tyrant, even thinking himself a brother / While he is murdering the just" (M 7:21-23). Furthermore, because Satan's assessment of Palamabron's task is an abstraction, it fails to account for Palamabron in his individuality. Palamabron's labours at the harrow are not simply a series of duplicable mechanical operations; they represent an outflow of Palamabron himself, and are affected by his individuality. As Moskal highlights, in vying for Palamabron's task, "Satan wants to make all sons interchangeable, denying their various individualities" (88). This central human dimension of activity is illustrated in Palamabron's effect upon the mills, and also in Satan's own oppression of the harrow.

Palamabron's harrow, which is responsible for "breathing fields" (M 5:2), as Blake describes it, may be a less violent form of disruption than the plough, yet it is still an effective intervention. Damon sees these two farming metaphors as signifying "wrath at the present state of affairs," in the case of the plough, "followed by pity for the sufferings of humanity" (175), which the harrow illustrates. The exercise of wrath or pity therefore requires a capacity for imaginative interpretation that is appropriate to the activity. Palamabron's capacity for imaginative interpretation accompanies him when he assumes Satan's duties at the mills. The incommensurability of Palamabron's active imagination with the abstracting and reductive outlook required for operating the mills results in chaos. The scene is Dionysian in its description: "The servants of the Mills drunken with wine and dancing wild / With shouts and Palamabrons songs, rending the forests green / With echoing confusion, tho' the Sun was risen on high" (M 8:8-10).

Palamabron, as an active contributor to the work of the imagination, is unsuited to the destructive work of the mills. He knows this about himself, and regrets his reticence after he discovers the disruption at the harrow, saying, "How should he[,] he[,] know the duties of another? O foolish forbearance / Would I had told Los, all my heart!" (M 7:28-29). In contrast to Palamabron's awareness, Satan's desire to operate the harrow demonstrates not only insensitivity towards Palamabron, but also a complete absence of self-knowledge. The role of self-knowledge in ethical interpretation will become increasingly significant as Milton's journey progresses.

Satan's effect upon the harrow – namely, that Palamabron's "horses are mad! his Harrow confounded! his companions enrag'd" (M 8:18) – results from the "mildness" and "self-imposition" with which he comports himself in his interactions with others. Although we later discover the role that Satan's daughter, Leutha, has played in the disruption, Satan's overall refusal to take responsibility for the havoc at the harrow only further emphasizes the incapacity with which Satan approaches his work there. Leutha describes how "entering the doors of Satans brain night after night / Like sweet perfumes I stupefied the masculine perceptions / And kept only the feminine awake" (M 12:4-6). Yet Leutha assumes too much guilt, for it is not the masculine perceptions themselves which inform imaginative interpretation, but the integration of masculine and feminine perceptions in the whole person. When "The Feminine separates from the Masculine & both from Man, / Ceasing to be His Emanations, Life to Themselves assuming!" (J 90:1-2), it is a step towards abstraction, further away from Eternity where the individual is undivided. Only the whole individual is capable of fully exercising the imagination; as division increases, interpretation must likewise become more reductive. This association

of division and reduction hinges on the desire for control, which is related to Satan's "primitive tyrannical attempts" to force Los to give him Palamabron's duty. Leutha's original deception of Satan is thus in keeping with the wilful disposition of Emanations in Blake, which Damon writes "seek for domination, can be dangerously destructive, and fight reintegration" (121). Nevertheless, Leutha's subsequent decision to repent marks her as exceptional, as I will explore shortly.

Contributing to the description of Satan's tyranny is his spiritual classification as one of the Elect, or "the Reasoning Negative" (M 5:14). Damon notes that Blake's notion of classes represents an inversion of the classes depicted in Milton's poetry – the Reprobate, the Redeemed, and the Elect (88). For Blake, the Reprobate "break all the rules and transgress the laws because they act from immediate inspiration" (Damon 88). Social institutions condemn these individuals because they subvert the status quo; however, in reality, they are the sustainers of human life insofar as they enable the continuation of imaginative activity. The Redeemed live in perpetual fear, oppressed by the Elect; yet the Reprobate will save them in the end. Their terror fortuitously prevents them from entering fully into their Selfhoods. Blake calls these first two classes "contraries," as opposed to the class of the Elect, which is a negation. Frye describes the difference between the Reprobate and the Redeemed as "[t]he former are the persecuted and outcast prophets: the latter are the timid well-meaning orthodox whose good qualities emerge only after the prophets have hammered their timidity to pieces" (189). The Elect includes those who perpetuate crimes against the imagination by limiting the interpretative faculties of those over whom they rule. Where the other two classes, the

Reprobate and the Redeemed, represent "vital forces in fruitful opposition" (Johnson 240), Satan's class of the Elect consists of "those who deny individualities" (Moskal 88).

In Blake's poem, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the Angels, who represent the Elect, are the transmitters of orthodoxy and the established order. They attempt to dissuade the poet from following after the Devils, who represent the Reprobate. Frye highlights this distinction when he writes that "for these 'Elect' anything which makes persecution and oppression seem less 'necessary,' that is, any blow struck for human freedom is their hell, and the announcement of a new hope, a new courage, a new faith, a new vision is, to them, 'the voice of the devil'" (198). Yet, in countering such disruptive visions, the Elect cannot draw upon imaginative energies, as they would thereby subvert themselves. Instead, the Elect must rely upon subtle methods of coercion, force, and rationalization; hence the alternate description of the Elect as "the Reasoning Negative." As one of the Elect, Satan's tyrannical attempts will therefore manifest themselves in a circuitous manner. Instead of a direct grab for power, Satan, under Leutha's influence, attempts to manipulate Los and Palamabron in order to get his way. This is not an exercise of the imagination, which is positive and active in nature; rather, it is underhanded and passive. It is an attempt to bring others under the influence of the same delusion he is under, and thus to expand the scope of his tyrannical Selfhood.

Under this delusion of Leutha, Satan begins to desire to do Palamabron's work, his "admiration [for Palamabron] join'd with envy / Cupidity unconquerable" (M 12:7-8). Once Satan assumes the station, the power that Leutha possesses over him grows, until finally, as she tells the assembly, "I sprang out of the breast of Satan, over the Harrow beaming / In all my beauty! That I might unloose the flaming steeds / As Elynittria use'd

to do" (M 12:10-12). Like Satan, Leutha wants to do the work of someone else. Paul Youngquist interprets Leutha's imitation of Elynittria as signalling that "[w]hat Leutha envies is not so much her rival, Elynittria, as the irreducible otherness of that rival" (561). This envy leads her to an attempt to supplant Elynittria's role, which is a literal expression of the desire to reduce otherness to sameness. Leutha does not know herself, and will therefore only represent herself through negation or illusion. For example, although she pretends to be Elynittria, "too well those living creatures / Knew that I was not Elynittria" (M 12:12-13). Also, to the servants of the harrow, she seems "a bow / Of varying colours on the hills" (M 12:14-15), which illustrates her insubstantial personality. Her attempt to unloose the horses, motivated by self-interest, finally forces Satan to act. His weakness is thereby revealed, for it is "with power above his own controll" that Satan "Compell'd the Gnomes to curb the horses" (M 12:16-17).

As Satan and Leutha attempt to regain control over the harrow, they only make matters worse. Instructing the gnomes "to throw banks of sand / Around the fiery flaming Harrow in labyrinthine forms" (M 12:17-18), they unwittingly enclose themselves within a "Hell of our own making" (M 12:23). Leutha likens their work in building this hell to the formation of a serpent whose stings represent the oppressive acts Satan performs to maintain control over the servants of the harrow (M 12:29). Leutha lists these acts as: "To do unkind things in kindness! with power armd, to say / The most irritating things in the midst of tears and love" (M 12:32-33); in short, to practice hypocrisy. Leutha's repeated retreats into "Satans inmost Palace of his nervous fine wrought Brain" (M 12:41) do not represent her reintegration into Satan's complete individuality. Instead, they prolong their

division, and underscore the hypocrisy of their actions: pretending to be one thing – the mild Satan – and being something else – a tyrant.

Los's judgment that "each his own station / Keep" (M 7:41-42) connects this segment of the story to an important image from the preface. This image, which Blake sets up in contrast to the "Young Men of the New Age," is of the "Hirelings in the Camp, the Court, & the University" (E 95). "Hirelings" recalls the metaphor Jesus uses in contrast to the shepherd: "But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth" (John 10:12). The hireling, as opposed to the shepherd, does not care for the sheep, and sees his work only as a means to an end[4]. The hirelings in Blake's preface, who have infiltrated every level of culture, are the ultimate practitioners of reductive interpretation, which most often manifests itself as instrumental reason. Not only does this type of interpretation enable them to maintain control over the development of culture, it does not presume any genius on the part of its representatives. The second paragraph of the preface describes the hirelings at length. They "would if they could, for ever depress Mental & prolong Corporeal War" (E 95) – advocating violence that brings death, rather than the intellectual violence that brings about revolution. Blake also accuses these "fashionable Fools" of depressing true art "by the prices they pretend to give for contemptible works or the expensive advertizing boasts they make of such works" (E 95). This deceptive aspect of the hirelings again aligns them with Satan, whose "seeming" and hypocrisy characterize his interactions with both Los and Palamabron. Finally, Blake describes them as "a Class of Men whose whole delight is in Destroying" (E 95). This destructive

[4] The figure of the hireling is again aligned with working as a means to an end in the Book of Job. In the passage, Job compares his own long suffering in expectation of relief to how "an hireling looketh for the reward of his work" (7:2), that is, in eager anticipation of an end.

element relates to the work of Satan's mills, which "grind out mental visions of a fallen world of fixed spatial and temporal dimensions" (Bloom 911), and discard the remainder.

The mills also stand for what Frye calls the "type of mind, which strives to reduce a world of form and beauty to a sandstorm of atoms" (290). This mind-set does not practice reductive interpretation simply for its own sake. Rather, its objective is domination, as signalled by the mill's description as "Satanic," which is a synonym in Blake for tyranny. In the same way, the hirelings seek to control the production and consumption of art in order to obstruct the coming apocalypse of the New Age. Against this reductive approach and the tyranny that accompanies it, Blake advances an interpretative orientation emerging out of the free exercise of the imagination. Furthermore, Blake's resistance is not an evasion of oppressive reality, but an offensive against tyranny fuelled by the imagination. His alignment of act and art emphasizes the role art plays in bringing about this New Age. The grandest art, Blake says in a letter to Reverend Dr. Trusler, is that which "rouzes the faculties to act" (E 702). Thus *Milton* is, on one level, a poem about the power of the imagination to compel action, and, on another level, a work of art that seeks to promote action. Echoing his own words from the letter to Trusler, Blake reveals this revolutionary aspect of *Milton* on the poem's first plate: "Rouze up O Young Men of the New Age! set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings!" (E 95).

The first point of engagement for this revolutionary message is the interpreting subject. In the Bard's song, the interpreting subject is Leutha, who, having "beheld Satans condemnation / She down descended into the midst of the Great Solemn Assembly / Offering herself a Ransom for Satan, taking on her, his Sin" (M 11:28-30). It

is important to note Leutha's status as being apart from the Assembly. This Assembly, which Palamabron calls down to judge his conflict with Satan, begins by judging in Palamabron's favour. Only after "a vast unfathomable Abyss" (M 9:35) opens up in Satan, breaching Eternity with the sight of "a World of deeper Ulro" (M 9:34), does the Assembly attempt to justify itself retroactively. This Abyss represents the injustice with which Satan has been judged. Ironically, the one-time Miller of Eternity, who specialized in reducing experience to a tractable level, has himself been reduced by the court. In choosing to divide himself from the Divine Family, Satan submits to the very abstraction that the Assembly has used to denounce him. He recognizes this injustice as he accuses "loud / The Divine Mercy, for protecting Palamabron in his tent" (M 9:41-42).

The Assembly's subsequent attempt at justification consists of reordering the chronology of events. Satan did not actually assume Rintrah's wrath until after the Assembly had made its decision (M 9:10-12); however, in order to support its unjust actions, the Assembly suggests to itself that "Palamabron dared not call a solemn Assembly / Till Satan had assum'd Rintrahs wrath" (M 11:24-25). Palamabron did not call down the Assembly because of Satan's wrath, but out of a self-serving purpose: "That he who will not defend Truth, may be compelled to / Defend a Lie, that he may be snared & caught & taken" (M 8:47-48). It is therefore ironic that the Assembly of Eternals, which Palamabron has summoned in order to discover the truth, must resort to self-deception in order to arrive at justice. In the end, it is this outright lie that provokes Leutha's intervention. The Eternals of the Great Assembly have in their complacency begun to practice reductive interpretation. Their desire to maintain the status quo,

heightened by their "Astonishment" at Satan's explosive reaction[5], leads them to favour Palamabron without adequately examining the events. As W.J.T. Mitchell notes, "[t]he Assembly's verdict probably breeds more chaos than Satan's exchange of duties with Palamabron" (292). Their passivity then goes so far as to descend into self-deception (an error that they accuse Satan of falling prey to: "In a feminine delusion of false pride self-deciev'd" [M 11:26]).

Moreover, neither Palamabron nor Satan can be said to be innocent of reductive interpretation. Palamabron, Mitchell argues, "is doubly guilty in that he consciously suppressed his true feelings and sold out to Satan" (292); furthermore, he continues to suppress his feelings by submitting them to the Assembly's corrupted processes of justice. For Palamabron to accomplish this ongoing suppression requires that he limit his own expectations and desires. This acquiescence to limitation contributes to the development of a reductive practice, and is incompatible with a freely imaginative approach. In contrast to Palamabron's self-constraint, Leutha struggles against the limitations that she must impose upon herself in order to declare that "All is my fault" in the presence of the Great Assembly. This struggle manifests itself most strongly in her appearance, as she is described as having "stood glowing with varying colours immortal, heart-piercing / And lovely: & her moth-like elegance shone over the Assembly" (M 11:32-33). Her speech also conveys the exuberance of her feeling, as exclamation marks are scattered throughout her story. Thus, although Leutha limits herself by taking on Satan's sin, she conceives of this boundary in terms of an infinite horizon, saying, "The

[5] The Assembly's discomfort with Satan's excessive response further underscores their complacent corruption, and suggests that they may have already traded the intellectual fervour of Eden for the pleasant rest of Beulah. If, as one of Blake's aphorisms suggests, "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom" (E 35), then one must ask who is wiser in this scene, Satan or the Eternals?

Sin was begun in Eternity, and will not rest to Eternity / Till two Eternitys meet together" (M 13:10-11). Again, this statement represents a deployment of Leutha's imaginative interpretation.

The selflessness of Leutha's action corresponds to its source in the imagination, and distinguishes it from the more self-serving actions of Satan, Palamabron, Los, and the Assembly. In each case, their decisions stem from the degrees of Selfhood each one possesses. John Howard describes the Selfhood as "survival-oriented, manifesting itself as a hold-fast defense mechanism toward exterior reality as well as repressive enchainments of the creativity within" (13). Satan, as the Prince of the Starry Wheels, represents the Selfhood's will to domination through the embodiment of mechanical and systematic processes of abstraction. Despite Leutha's role in the destruction of the harrow, Satan's own actions still reflect the methods of a tyrant. To a lesser extent, Palamabron and Los also exercise their respective Selfhoods by choosing to act out of selfish motivations. This behaviour represents the survival dimension of Selfhood. In Palamabron, it manifests itself in his selfish submission to Satan's pestering, as well as his over-hasty submission to the Assembly, which is an example of the passivity of avoiding direct confrontation. Los, similarly, gives in to Satan's mildness and forgets "that pity divides the soul / And man, unmans" (M 8:19-20). This mistake stems, in my view, from Los's own preoccupation with his fallen state. Instead of remaining firm in his convictions of Palamabron's and Satan's respective callings to the harrow and the mill, Los relents so that Satan will leave him alone with his struggles. This motivation is hinted at early in the song when Los, exasperated, says to Satan: "Get to thy Labours at the Mills & leave me to my wrath" (M 4:14). Although this is intended as an encouragement

to Satan, it is also a dismissal, as indicated by Los's refusal to talk any longer with Satan. To be certain, Satan's pestering does not constitute one side of a conversation; however, Los too acts out of his Selfhood when he chooses to allow his wrath and Satan's false pity to remain separate. Had he attempted to engage with Satan, he would have been able to uncover the selfish motivations at the root of Satan's pretensions towards pity. His dismissal of Satan thus makes Los complicit in the perpetuation of Satan's Selfhood. In this context, Blake's statement that "All pitied the piteous & was wrath with the wrathful & Los heard it" (M 5:4) foreshadows the many consequences of Los's dismissal. These results include the maddening effect of Satan's science of pity on the harrow; the mistaken judgment made by the Great Assembly, which condemns Rintrah unjustly; and, finally, the permanent division Satan effects in himself, in which "his bosom grew / Opake against the Divine Vision" (M 9:30-1).

It is significant that the audience's response to the Bard's song is similar to the Great Assembly's response to Leutha's confession. In response to the Bard's song, for instance, the audience "question'd the immortal / Loud voicd Bard" and "condemn'd the high tone'd Song / Saying Pity and Love are too venerable for the imputation / Of Guilt" (M 13:46, 47-49). Like the Great Assembly, the audience would rather question and dismiss an interpreting subject whose actions stem from the imagination, than allow the subject's creative intervention to inspire the imaginations of the audience members towards revolution. When Leutha finishes her speech, the Assembly is described as having "Loud raging / Thundered" and as being "dark & clouded" (M 13:14-15), a disruptive response that foreshadows the similar "loud resounding murmur" of the Bard's audience. After Leutha flees the Assembly in fear, Elynittria approaches her and "sooth'd

her with soft words" (M 13:38). This apparent act of kindness is in reality another example of Satanic mildness, and results in the suppression of Leutha's prophetic intervention. Lulled into passivity "In moments new created for delusion, interwoven round about" (M 13:39), Leutha abandons her self-annihilating mission, and unwittingly contributes to the "Intricate labyrinths of Time and Spaces unknown" (M 13:43) by giving birth to Death and Rahab, the latter of whom "symbolizes the false church of this world" (Damon 338). Under this delusion, Leutha does not realize that she is actually being imprisoned "In Palamabrons Tent, and Oothoon was her charming guard" (M 13:44). Although her intervention fails, her role as the tragic victim of tyranny at the close of the Bard's song affects Milton alone among the other audience members in Eternity, whose own responses tend rather towards scepticism and critique. It is the revolutionary dynamic illustrated by the lone penitent in the midst of a mass audience in the grip of Selfhood that finally leads to Milton's response.

2.

Blake's call in the preface to "Painters," "Sculptors," and "Architects" that they be "just & true to [their] own Imaginations" (E 95) indicates the important role he envisions for artists in the world. This role is composed of resistance and revolutionary action. Blake's belief in the reductive tendencies of the rationalism of his day contributes to his conception of the forces of domination and tyranny at work in his world. Out of this conception emerges his solution: an ethics founded on the free exercise of the imagination. Blake projects this dynamic of tyranny and freedom onto the production of art, and, specifically, in the work of John Milton. In this section, I will examine Blake's

assessment of the Enlightenment project in order to establish, by contrast, his expectations for artists and artistic production. This discussion requires chiefly an investigation of Blake's critique of Milton, and especially his assessment of Milton's failure as a poet. Blake does not consider Milton's failure irreparable; rather, he selects Milton deliberately as the eponymous hero of this brief epic in order to redeem him.

Milton's response to the Bard's song occurs after the Bard has taken "refuge in Miltons bosom" (M 14:9). Mitchell surmises that Blake delays Milton's response in this way in order to suggest that "the effectiveness of the song for Milton is not so much in hearing the words as in uniting with the point of view of the speaker" (294). The delay is also important because it emphasizes the notion of poetic succession that is so vital to this poem. Just as the Bard enters into Milton, inspiring him to action, Milton's subsequent entry into Blake becomes a similar call to action within the context of creative activity. While the Bard's flight into Milton symbolizes the effect of art upon the interpreting subject, the context of the Bard's flight is also important for how it sets Milton apart from the mass. This context is primarily the "murmuring in the Heavens of Albion" that shakes "the roots & fast foundations of the Earth in doubtfulness" (M 14:4, 8). By entering into Milton, the Bard identifies himself in his poetic nonconformity with Milton. In short, Milton becomes a symbol for the radical; like Leutha, he stands against the crowd.

After the Bard takes refuge in him, Milton experiences the first of several epiphanies in the poem. The moment the Bard enters him represents a realization that shakes him from his reverie of "One hundred years," which he spent "pondring the intricate mazes of Providence / Unhappy tho in heav'n," and in which "he obey'd, he murmur'd not. he was silent" (M 2:17-~~18~~). In light of the Bard's song, this early

revelation from the poem's invocation acquires new meaning. Milton has spent his time in Eternity contemplating the complexities of God in silent obedience, which is the same kind of passive thinking produced by the "Daughters of Memory" against which Blake rails in the preface. His solitary behaviour is hardly in keeping with Damon's definition of Eternity as "a place of great activity" (130), let alone Blake's own description of how, "in the fury of Poetic Inspiration," Eternity aims "To build the Universe stupendous: Mental forms Creating" (M 30:19, 20). Milton's sullen obedience fails to promote the collaborative work of the imagination. The Bard's song helps Milton to see the obstacles that he himself has established, which bar his way to joy in Eternity. He declares this realization when he says, "I in my Selfhood am that Satan" (M 14:30). His passivity in Eternity results from the lingering effects of his Selfhood on earth.

Blake describes Milton's Selfhood most completely in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Regarding Milton's most famous work, *Paradise Lost*, Blake suggests that "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it" (E 35). Milton is a "true Poet" in the sense of writing under inspiration, rather than through reflection; however, as he attempts to write more consciously, he begins to lose the thread of inspiration. As reflection and deliberate apologetic manoeuvring replace artistic inspiration, Milton erroneously describes the Trinity as an image of the existing tyrannical system advanced by the religious manifestation of the Enlightenment, specifically Deism, in which "the Father is Destiny, the Son, a Ratio of the five senses. & the Holy-ghost, Vacuum" (E 35). Having conceived of the hierarchy of heaven in tyrannical terms, Milton takes those assumptions with him after his death, and behaves in

Eternity under these same false assumptions. As Nancy Moore Goslee comments, Milton is "a self who recognizes that it is threatened by its own earlier rigid, lifeless definition of the Christian afterlife as a place for disembodied 'souls'" (400). These assumptions lead to blind obedience (the object of Milton's obedience never being revealed) and to his being silent when he should be actively participating in the vigorous "Mental Fight," which Blake describes in *Milton*'s prefatory hymn. Blake's greatest difficulty with *Paradise Lost*, however, is in what he perceives to be its decline into passivity. The critique in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* explicitly connects this passivity to tyranny:

> Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and the restrainer or reason usurps its place & governs the unwilling.
>
> And being restraind it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.
>
> The history of this is written in Paradise Lost. (E 34)

Milton's self-association with Satan is a recognition of his complicity in the restraint of desires – both his own and his readers'. For example, Blake calls Milton's creation of such powerful personalities as Satan and the other devils an example of Milton writing "at liberty." These unrestricted characters and their imagined dialogues in Hell represent Milton's participation in the exuberant expression of desire through imaginative interpretation. The gradual reassertion of God's authority and a return to the existing creation myth represent a faltering in Milton's inspiration. Rather than pursuing the vein of revolutionary inspiration offered to him in the compelling character of Satan, he falls back on collective religious memory for his muse.

The description of Milton's subsequent descent to earth, which many commentators have compared with the account of Satan's fall in *Paradise Lost* (e.g., Mitchell 295; Bloom 915), contains an important section about "the nature of infinity" (M 15:21). This section is helpful to look at here, as it describes Milton's original mistake and the manner in which he has begun to make reparations for his error. As Milton descends, Blake describes the difference between "a traveller thro Eternity" and "the weak traveller." To the former traveller, with whom Blake now associates Milton, newly departed from Eternity, "the earth [is] one infinite plane" (M 15:32). The latter traveller, conversely, perceives the world "as apparent," because that traveller's perception is "confin'd beneath the moony shade" (M 15:32, 33), or under a tyranny resulting from impoverished desires. Hence the weak traveller is a victim of tyrannical forces, and a practitioner of reductive interpretation. In capitulating to the religious, philosophical, and political status quo in *Paradise Lost*, Milton betrayed his poetic inspiration, and shut his eyes to "the east & west encompassing / Its vortex; and the north & south, with all their starry host" (M 15:28-29). Surrounded by a cloud of artistic witnesses, which Blake represents as "a universe of starry majesty" (M 15:25), Milton had ignored the inspired wisdom of those worlds of imagination, created by himself and others. Instead, he had chosen, out of passivity and cowardice, to do the easier task and toe the conventionally acceptable line, in this resembling Palamabron, who "fear'd to be angry lest Satan should accuse him of / Ingratitude" (M 7:11-12).

Blake also says that Milton's imagination has been "curbd by the general malady & infection from the silly Greek & Latin slaves of the Sword" (E 95). To his mind, "[t]he Greek Muses are daughters of Mnemosyne, or Memory, and not of Inspiration or

Imagination" (E 531). Art that is based wholly on the models of prior works of art does not have the inspired vitality of original art. Frye describes the distinction, particularly as it applies to *Paradise Lost*, when he writes, "The human imagination knows that man fell: the Biblical story of Adam and Eve is a vision of that fact which has frozen into a myth. Milton's reason told him that that story was 'true'; his imagination told him that it was an image of truth" (118). Thus Milton expresses his creativity through the dialectic of rational truth and imaginative truth. The former represents the conclusion of an argument, or a mathematical equation; the latter is prolific and potentially infinite in its horizon. In his descriptions of Satan, Milton has found an original means of expressing the truth of the fall anew. As he strays into orthodoxy, however, Milton's imagination becomes increasingly subject to "the silly Greek & Latin slaves of the Sword." These "slaves" are not the Classical writers themselves, whose works Blake describes as "sublime conceptions" (E 531), but their subsequent disseminators. In every age, these perpetrators of cultural commodification have "Stolen and Perverted" (E 95) visionary works of the imagination, using them to advance the ends of the institution and maintain the status quo.

A helpful comparison can be found in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in Blake's opposing descriptions of poets and priests. At first, poets "animated all sensible objects with Gods or Geniuses, calling them by the names and adorning them with [...] whatever their enlarged & numerous sense could percieve [sic]" (E 38). These acts of life-giving creativity (in which the poets "animated" the objects around them) represent a limitless exercise of the imagination. Eventually, however, "a system was formed, which some took advantage of & enslav'd the vulgar by attempting to realize or abstract the

mental dieties [sic] from their objects; thus began Priesthood" (E 38). At length, "men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast" (E 38). According to Frye, those who follow the priests "accept established religions, philosophies and social conditions because they are established" (333). That is, they do not exercise their capacity for imagining life as otherwise than it is. Milton's comparable submission to the external controls of orthodoxy is part of what Blake means when he speaks of Milton's scattered Sixfold Emanation[6]. In his failure to be "just & true" (E 95) to his own imagination, Milton has allowed his Selfhood to guide his perceptions and creativity. The broader project corresponding to this surge of the Selfhood, of which Blake's critique of Classical culture is only a part, is the abstracting spectre that Blake associates with Enlightenment thinking. In *Jerusalem*, Blake describes this spectre as

> the Great Selfhood
> Satan, Worshipd as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth
> Having a white Dot calld a Center, from which branches out
> A Circle in continual gyrations. this became a Heart
> From which sprang numerous branches varying their motions
> Producing many Heads three or seven or ten, & hands & feet
> Innumerable at will of the unfortunate contemplator
> Who becomes his food[:] such is the way of the Devouring Power
> (J 29:17-24)

The combined forces of abstraction that comprise this Devouring Power are inextricably related to the rationalistic mills that grind experience into "the sandstorm of

[6] As we shall see, Blake's Emanation finally reveals itself in Ololon, whom Mary Lynn Johnson writes "epitomizes the misunderstood and mistreated women in his life, the female figures of his poems [...], and the alienated and unfulfilled feminine and creative aspects of his still-unrealized full humanity" (244).

atonement evoked by Frye. Besides the disseminators of Classical culture, the other chief contributing factors to growth of the Enlightenment project have already been introduced: the hirelings, for whom the ends have made the means irrelevant; the rule of memory over inspiration; the tendency and encouragement of reductive, rather than imaginative, interpretation; and the decline of artists into intellectual passivity at the hands of the forces of tyranny. Also, despite Milton's early realization that he has played a role in the growing influence of Enlightenment thinking on the nation's interpretative faculties, his journey is a progression towards self-knowledge that remains incomplete until his final confrontation with his Emanation.

Milton's perceptions in his descent to earth further describe his involvement in the advance of tyranny, and, more broadly, create an image of the nature and effect of Enlightenment thinking on society. In the first place, the stakes involved in redeeming his Emanation are defined. As he surveys "the Cruelties of Ulro" (M 17:9), Milton recalls his "conflict with those Female forms," his wives and daughters, "which in blood & jealousy / Surrounded him, dividing & uniting without end or number" (M 17:7-8). Blake suggests that Milton's relationships with these women were similar in nature to the reductive relationship with truth that he espoused after capitulating to orthodoxy in *Paradise Lost*. This suggestion emerges in Blake's figurative retelling of "the legend of Milton dictating to his womenfolk" (Bloom 916). By comparing Milton to "the Rock Sinai; that body, / Which was on earth born to corruption" (M 17:14-15), Blake aligns Milton with the God of the Old Testament, Jehovah, who, in this tyrannical capacity, is really Urizen, Blake's representative for the divisive will to domination. Milton's desire for control over his wives and daughters results in his reduction of their individualities. This reduction now

provokes the "dividing & uniting without end or number," which his Emanations deploy as an offensive strategy against him. In so doing, they are declaring their separation from Milton as well as their autonomy; however, they do not realize the destructive consequences of their actions, which include prolonging abstraction, the increased desire for domination, and the general encouragement of Selfhood. Milton's subsequent struggle with Urizen "on the shores of Arnon" (M 19:5), which "Rahab and Tirzah trembled to behold" (M 19:28), is thus an extended metaphor for his efforts to overcome the grip of reductive interpretation in order to redeem his Emanations. I will examine the scene at greater length in the last section of this chapter.

As a final introduction to Blake's critique of the Enlightenment project before exploring his ethical alternative, I will briefly examine the seductive mockery with which Milton's Emanations confront him during his struggle with Urizen. Their effort to "entice Milton across the river" is an attempt, Bloom suggests, to convince Milton to "give up his quest for a New Israel of awakened Albion" (917). The main reason for their concern is that they perceive in Milton's struggle towards "the Universe of Los and Enitharmon" (M 19:25) an attempt to reintegrate the world, and therefore an end to the exercise of their separate wills. Thus they attempt to entice Milton with the promises offered by Enlightenment, all of which comprise some variation on that other Satanic temptation: "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them [...] If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4:6-7). The Emanations point in mock-despair to the deterioration of government, study, and the economy, attempting to divide Milton's revolutionary energies. For example, they invite him to "behold the Kings of Canaan! [...] / Bound with the Chain of Jealousy by Los & Enitharmon" (M 19:36, 38), compare

"The banks of Cam" to "cold learnings streams," and describe how "Londons dark-frowning towers; / Lament upon the winds of Europe" (M 19:39-40). These declarations represent subtle perversions of Blake's prefatory warnings about the hirelings in "the Camp, the Court, & the University" (E 95). In reality, these appeals to a divided revolution are an invitation for Milton's Selfhood to resume its place in the tyrannical project of Enlightenment. They even offer Milton a throne, saying, "be thou King / Of Canaan and reign in Hazor" (M 20:5-6). The deteriorations in human culture that the Emanations cite all result from the influence of the same Enlightenment project. Under the rubric of Enlightenment thinking, they become the positive, though corrupt, institutions of monarchy, scholasticism, and commerce.

In keeping with the ignorance that arises from the exercise of their Selfhoods, the Emanations do not account for Milton's renewed poetic genius, which is represented by the Bard lodged within his breast. By uniting his perspective with the Bard's, Milton is able to see beyond the limits of his existing set of beliefs, particularly those passive and reductive beliefs to which he submitted his will during his life and later in Eternity. This union might also be called an imaginative interpretation of the Bard's song. Seeing himself in Leutha as the lone penitent, in Palamabron as the civilized labourer, in Rintrah as the wrathful radical, in Los as the Poet, and, especially, in Satan as the tyrant, Milton allows the Bard's song to rouse his faculties to action. It becomes clear that he has been unconscious far too long, perhaps under the same delusion that oppresses Leutha, as soon as he asks the fateful question: "What do I here before the Judgment? without my Emanation? / With the daughters of memory, & not with the daughters of inspiration[?]" (M 14:28-29). In this gap between memory and inspiration, an ethics emerges that is

inseparable from Blake's critique of tyranny, insofar as it advocates freedom grounded in the imagination.

3.

Milton's initial response to the Bard's song is not explicitly ethical. Rather, it represents the initiation of an imaginative orientation towards experience. As Blake suggests in his description of how "Albions sleeping Humanity began to turn upon his Couch; / Feeling the electric flame of Miltons awful precipitate descent" (M 20:25-6), the step towards self-annihilation is only the stirring of ethical possibility. Milton's descent to earth coincides with Blake's deployment of the imagination as a means of redeeming him posthumously. Likewise, it signals a quality of Eternity that is at the heart of Blake's approach to ethical activity. Frye hints at this quality when he writes that "the real war in society is the 'Mental Fight' between visionaries and the champions of tyranny" (68). If ethics can be defined as the pursuit of "the good life with and for others"[7], then Blake's envisioned "good life" may be found in those worlds of the imagination built by people through the ages. Explicating this historical accumulation of creativity, Frye suggests that "[a]ll imaginative and creative acts, being eternal, go to build up a permanent structure, which Blake calls Golgonooza [...] Golgonooza will then be the city of God, the New Jerusalem which is the total form of all human culture and civilization" (91). Ethical activity in this world is thus a movement towards the renewal of Eternity advanced through intellectual struggle. To this end, Milton's long struggle with Urizen is a fitting image of his movement towards ethical action in the poem.

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[7] I have adapted this definition of ethics from one formulated by Paul Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another* (172).

Milton persists in his struggle with Urizen until the end of the poem, despite his Emanations' invitation to abandon his revolutionary quest. This struggle, which ceases when "Urizen faints in terror striving among the Brooks of Arnon / With Miltons Spirit" (M 39:53), represents Milton's ongoing fight to overcome the effects of Enlightenment thinking produced through his own writing. Blake describes the fight as an "enormous strife. one giving life, the other giving death / To his adversary" (M 19:31). The distinction between death and life is appropriate to the strategies deployed by Urizen and Milton, respectively. Where Urizen "took up water from the river Jordan: pouring on / To Miltons brain the icy fluid" (M 19:8-9), "Milton took of the red clay of Succoth" (M 19:10) and begins to build "As with new clay a Human form" for Urizen (M 19:14). Urizen attempts to impede Milton's descent by freezing his interpretative faculties with water from the river Jordan, a symbol, perhaps, of the orthodoxy associated with the Baptismal sacrament. Bloom interprets Milton's actions, by contrast, as an expression of "his high purpose [...] to remake Urizen-Jehovah in the image of man, by using the red clay that formed Adam, as an agent of humanization" (916). As Milton works to create "new flesh on the Demon cold" (M 19:13), he participates in the deployment of the imagination as a resistance to the reductive and ossifying systematizations of the Enlightenment project. The ongoing struggle between Urizen and Milton also articulates the instability of this resistance, such as when Urizen changes the clay upon which Milton journeys into marble. Underlying the purely narrative qualities of their struggle, however, is Milton's sincere effort to rectify his past mistakes.

Also essential to this ethical movement is the role of inspiration. As has already been discussed, Blake's distinction between memory and inspiration corresponds

especially to the distinction between passivity and activity. Blake describes this connection in the prefatory hymn to *Milton*. The first two stanzas consist of a series of rhetorical questions, which are the preferred expressive form for the often-nostalgic daughters of memory. By contrast, the focussed anaphora of the third stanza employs the language of "Corporeal War" in order to describe the production of art. The effect of this contrast is to compound action, in the form of an imperative command. The production of art is thus a call to action, and specifically a call to participate in the imaginative project. The increasing potential of each line in the third stanza builds to a climax, which implies an invitation to enter Blake's "Chariot of fire" in the pursuit of Jerusalem, which is a symbol for the New Age. This image also resonates with Milton's comet-like descent from Eternity. In both cases, the image of "the Vehicular terror" (M 17:31) necessitates an interpretation.

The location of the "Chariot of fire" at the prefatory poem's climax, on the one hand, helps to carry the reader along. The repeated instructions imply a collaborative pursuit, which in turn facilitates an imaginative response. Collaboration works as a safeguard against the egotism and solitude of abstraction. On the other hand, Milton's descent "as a falling star" (M 15:47) provokes "divine Enitharmon" to call "all her daughters, Saying. Surely to unloose my bond / Is this Man come! Satan shall be unloosd upon Albion" (M 17:31-33). As has already been shown, this interpretation is not simply hysterical paranoia; she has very good reasons to interpret the falling star as a sign of Satan's approach. But Enitharmon has forgotten that the Bible calls both Satan and Christ the Morning Star. Regardless of her expectations, Enitharmon's fear disables her capacity for imaginative interpretation. Furthermore, although we are aware of Milton's reasons

for descending, Blake reminds us too of our responsibility to interpret everything imaginatively, when he describes Milton's progress through the Mundane Shell. This image represents the pinnacle of man's capacity for abstraction. Blake describes it as "a cavernous Earth / Of labyrinthine intricacy, twenty-seven folds of opakeness / And finishes where the lark mounts" (M 17:25-27). Although Milton is passing through it "to Satans seat," he has come from "where the lark mounts," and this should impede any over-hasty interpretations on the part of onlookers. As will become clearer later in this study, the lark represents an irruption of Eternity into the material world. Damon describes it as "the new idea which comes as inspiration in the dawn" (234). Thus, for Milton to come from where the lark mounts means that he has passed through the source of inspiration itself: Eternity. Of course, Eternity itself can become corrupted, and has produced the greatest proponent of reduction, Satan. Nevertheless, it also represents an ideal, within which even Satan may find redemption in the end. This heterodoxy is suggested in *The Ghost of Abel*, where Jehovah commands Satan to "Thou Thyself go to Eternal Death / In Self Annihilation even till Satan Self-subdud Put off Satan / Into the Bottomless Abyss" (E 272). This scenario is important, however, not for what it says about Blake's theological beliefs, but for its disclosure of Blake's understanding of the relationship between the work of the imagination and redemption. Moskal comments that the possibility "that even the 'satanic' elect can repent demonstrates that within the contexts of groups of persons, Blake remains hopeful" (90). If the ethical objective is a renewal of Eternity, then the work of redemption will play the essential role.

As Milton's journey progresses, he begins to discover the full extent of the Enlightenment's influence on the world. Although his initial departure arises in part out

of an eschatological anxiety that he will be found "unannihilate / And I be siez'd & giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood" (M 14:23-24), it is not until the end of the poem that Milton understands the connection between self-knowledge and self-sacrifice. Only after he reaches the end of his journey can he comprehend the subtlety of "the Reasoning Power in Man," which "is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal / Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated alway / To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination" (M 40:34-37). To discover himself, however, apart from the Selfhood given to him through his participation in the Enlightenment project, will require true engagement with others: first with Blake, then with Los, and finally with Ololon, his Emanation. This important collaborative dimension of the work of the imagination has already been hinted at in the Bard's entry into Milton; however, it is not until Milton and Blake begin to share, albeit unwittingly, in the redemptive exercise of the imagination that real action can take place. Thus begins the inspired, ethical activity that Blake describes as "walk[ing] forward thro' Eternity" (M 21:14).

Chapter II

Enlightenment and Resistance to Prophecy

This chapter will consider the extent to which Blake believes Enlightenment thinking has infiltrated the "worlds of the Imagination." As Blake asserts in the second part of *Milton*, Book One, these worlds encompass much more that just art, as it is conventionally understood. When Blake warns of "Hirelings in the Camp, the Court, & the University" (E 95), he is pointing to a structure of domination deeply rooted in all aspects of culture. The resistance displayed first by Rintrah and Palamabron, and later by the other Sons of Los, indicates a tragic disruption in the proper work of the imagination in Generation. Disentangling the root of tyranny from creative expression requires that we follow Blake as he "walk[s] forward thro' Eternity" (M 21:14). By learning to discern between the "regions of the Imagination" and the reductive realm of Enlightenment thinking, we can determine the significance of Milton's prophesized act of "set[ting] free / Orc from his Chain of Jealousy" (M 20:60-61). In this act, Milton will reveal himself to be "the Awakener" of Albion, capable of undermining the somniferous work of his own Shadow, which is the lingering effect on the world of Milton's Puritanical impulses as manifest in his writings. In order to articulate more clearly the entrenchment of Enlightenment thinking in culture, I will begin by considering Blake's complicated description of these "nether regions of the Imagination." By explicating Blake's assessment and judgment of the Enlightenment, we will be better equipped to define the dynamic between the worlds of Generation and of Eternity. These descriptions will provide a firm basis for considering the resistance to prophecy displayed by Los's sons,

and how that resistance reflects Blake's assessment of the corruption permeating the imaginative pursuit. From that point, the essential questions about Blake's concept of subjectivity and its relationship to interpretation can be more effectively answered in the third chapter.

The second part of *Milton*, Book the First, describes Milton's actions after he departs from heaven, including his entry into Blake and his journey through "the nether regions of the Imagination" (M 21:6). After Milton enters Blake, Blake acquires the ability to see the work of Eternity as it is accomplished on earth through the exercise of the imagination. Blake translates this work of Eternity into several mythological locations, the centre of which is the City of Golgonooza. Other related locations include Bowlahoola, Allamanda, and Entuthon-Benython. Together, they are called "the nether regions of the Imagination" because they represent the workings of the imaginative faculties in the material world, as expressed through the activity of the individual human being. As Blake enters into these regions, not only does he observe his surroundings, he also employs his interpretative faculties to discern the corruption therein. This corruption becomes even more apparent after Milton-Blake meets Los, the personification of the poetic impulse in humanity. Los brings Milton-Blake to Golgonooza, but is rebuffed by his two sons at the gates. These sons, Rintrah and Palamabron, worry that Los is foolishly showing pity to Milton, who they believe will wreck further violence on the already unconscious Albion. The bulk of the story comprises Los's defence to them of Milton's descent.

At the heart of Los's defence is his belief in "an old Prophecy of Eden," namely, "That Milton of the Land of Albion should up ascend / Forwards from Ulro from the Vale

of Felpham; and set free / Orc from his Chain of Jealousy" (M 20:57, 59-61). This prophecy suggests that Milton has come to begin a revolution that will free humanity from tyranny. In true inspirational form, Los's recollection of this prophecy comes only "At last when desperation almost tore his heart in twain" (M 20:56). That is, the prophecy is remarkably convenient. Los's appeal to this prophecy thus raises similar questions to those that the Eternal assembly puts forward after the Bard's song, in which they "question'd the immortal / Loud voicd Bard," "condemn'd the high tone'd Song" (M 13:46-47), and finally ask the Bard, "Where hadst thou this terrible Song" (M 13:50). Like the assembly, both Rintrah and Palamabron (and, to an extent, the reader) respond "in doubtfulness" (M 14:8) to Los's prophecy. W.J.T. Mitchell expresses our uncertainty when he writes: "There is an unmistakable element of the ridiculous in the convenient timing of Los's memory here" (297). Insofar as the prophecy "strain[s] the reader's suspension of disbelief to the breaking point" (297), it fulfils Blake's broader objective to encourage imaginative interpretation in his readers through the narrative itself. As Jerome McGann writes, this kind of art "offers forms upon which imagination can feed and grow" (13). Thus Los's lately recollected prophecy is an invitation to imagine its potential validity and relevance. Resisting such a prophecy is to rely more steadfastly upon autonomous reason and common sense, and thus upon a reductive notion of what is possible. The response of Los's sons is therefore of concern, as it suggests that Enlightenment thinking and its purveyors have begun to exert some measure of control over the imaginative life of Golgonooza.

1.

In both his illustration and his text, Blake is precise about the location where Milton falls: "on my left foot falling on the tarsus" (M 15:49). Damon suggests that the left foot may be a symbol for the rational domain ruled by Urizen[8]. If this is the case, then "Blake's emphasis on his left foot is a statement that Milton became part of Blake primarily through his ideas" (Damon 140). Furthermore, Milton's choice to enter into Urizen's domain could correspond to the more literally rendered struggle that the two characters have in "the Desarts of Midian" (M 17:17), discussed in the preceding chapter. This association also explains the significance of the "black cloud redounding spread over Europe" (M 15:50) that emerges from Blake's foot. As Harold Bloom suggests, when Milton enters Blake, he "is still burdened by the Spectre" (915), a remark which corresponds to Damon's description that "[t]he Spectre is the rational power of the divided man" (380). Rintrah and Palamabron are correct in their assessment of the cloud as a manifestation of "Miltons Religion" (M 22:38). In light of Damon's remark, the cloud can also be interpreted as a sign of the broader Enlightenment project in which Milton participated, that is, a sign of his reliance on reason to the exclusion of inspiration. Yet the diffusion of the cloud is not a sign of a resurgence in tyranny, as Los's sons fear. Rather, it represents the disclosure of the embedded tyranny that has been present in the world as a result of Milton's failures as a poet. In merging with Blake, Milton becomes subject to the inspired poet's powers of discernment. Blake, in this instance, is able to

[8] The context for Damon's conjecture is found in his entry on 'The Foot,' in which he points to the suggestion of Merrill Patterson, "that the hands and feet might fall into the fourfold system, the right hand being North; the left hand, East; the left foot, South; and the right foot, West. This theory explains the descent of Milton into Blake's left foot, which is under Urizen" (Damon 140). This explanation draws upon Blake's association of the Four Zoas (Urthona/Los, Urizen, Luvah, and Tharmas) with the four points of the compass (respectively, North, South, East, and West). Blake provides a picture of this association on Plate 33 of *Milton* (E 133).

distinguish between the Satanic in Milton, which is his will to oppression, and Milton the repentant individual. On the level of the individual, the cloud is therefore a sign of the ethical revolution taking place within Blake's mind. Blake has exerted his imagination to see through Milton's accumulated mistakes to the individual man who can be redeemed, and begins to cast off Milton's spectre in the process. The greater significance of Blake's act of imaginative discernment for the ethical approach developed in this poem will be explored in detail in Chapter 3. For now, it is sufficient to note that this vision represents Blake's assessment of the condition of art in his time, and, specifically, his diagnosis of the enduring effect of Milton's capitulations to tyranny in his poetry.

The description of Milton's fall onto Blake's left foot recalls Los's strange response to the conflict between Satan and Palamabron. Observing the drunken servants of the mills, "Los took off his left sandal placing it on his head, / Signal of solemn mourning" (M 8:11-12). Masashi Suzuki provides historical context for Blake's use of this image, describing how "[i]n later Jewish tradition the drawing off of the shoe was regarded as a customary gesture of mourning" (46). In light of Damon's reading, Los's sign of "solemn mourning" can also be usefully interpreted in relation to the domain of Urizen. This conjecture, when applied to Milton's entry into Blake, likewise raises important questions about Milton-Blake as a figure of resistance against Enlightenment. When Los beholds the chaotic scene at Satan's mills, he responds by placing a symbol of Urizen's domain – his left sandal – on top of his head, where Los's reason is located. The juxtaposition of the two symbols of reason is ironic because of the strange way in which Los expresses it. In effect, Los has placed one symbol of reason under the power of another. Indeed, the ridiculous image of Los balancing his sandal on his head suggests

irrationality inherent in autonomous reason. Likewise, Satan's servants, "drunken with wine and dancing wild," whom Los observes (M 8:8), present a sharp contrast to the typically ordered and reductive nature of their work at the mill. Since Los performs his mournful act in response to his observation of the mills, it is possible to read the act as an example of imaginative interpretation. He perceives the event, creatively interprets it, and expresses this interpretation in a symbol that operates on several levels. Although Los recognizes the scene as a consequence of the mistake he has made by forgetting "that pity divides the soul" (M 8:19), his decision to represent his regret with such an absurd gesture pushes his interpretation beyond simply a greater awareness of self, that is, beyond mourning for his mistake. He is able to discern in the scene a history of oppression that has contributed to the chaos at the mills in the first place. The source of this oppression reveals itself in Satan's subsequent response to the Great Assembly's miscarriage of justice. The uncontrollable fury that leads Satan to declare himself "God alone" and to "rend this accursed Family from my covering" (M 9:25, 29) is the embedded vein of repressed chaos, which only encounters with representatives of the imagination, such as Palamabron, can momentarily unleash. The problem, of course, is not the fury itself, but Satan's self-righteous hypocrisy: he will not acknowledge this aspect of who he is. Los's perception corresponds to Blake's belief in the irrationality at the root of Enlightenment thinking. This paradox can be helpfully articulated through observations made by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno remark: "Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth

is radiant with triumphant calamity" (1). Like Blake, though writing almost a hundred and fifty years later, Horkheimer and Adorno perceive that there is a disjunction between the idealistic objectives of Enlightenment and the way in which these aims play out in practice. For Horkheimer and Adorno, this disjunction comes to a head under the organized and state-sanctioned mass murders committed by the Nazi regime. For Blake, a similar clarity emerges out of the aftermath of the French Revolution, particularly, in the recapitulation to tyranny represented by the success of Napoleon. The French Revolution carried with it all the apocalyptic potentiality that Blake describes in the scene of preparation for "the Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations" that closes *Milton*. Yet in the background of both the French and American Revolutions are Deistic and materialist ideas – ideas that Blake believed to be highly reductive of experience. Instead of freeing people to participate in imaginative interpretation, these religious and philosophical frameworks limit interpretation to that which is reasonable. As Frye suggests, "[a] revolution based on such ideas is not an awakening of the spirit of man: if it kills a tyrant, it can only replace him with another, as the French Revolution swung from Bourbon to Bonaparte" (66).

In his unengraved poem *The French Revolution*, written in 1791, well before he became disillusioned with the revolution's claims, Blake attempts to describe poetically the accumulation of possibility that he saw as central to the imaginative revolution. He first imagines the approach of revolution with calamitous descriptions of "loud thunders roll, troubling the dead" (FR 61); "ancient darkness and trembling wander thro the palace" (FR 63); and "The nerves of five thousand years ancestry tremble, shaking the heavens of France" (FR 70). This quaking culminates in the scene describing the National

Assembly, in which the Duke of Orleans, "generous as mountains" (FR 175), provides an ethical caution to his fellow nobles. He says, "go, merciless man! enter into the infinite labyrinth of another's brain / Ere thou measure the circle that he shall run" (FR 190-1). The other nobles remain indifferent to the plight of the people. They are described as sitting "round like clouds on the mountains, when the storm is passing away" (FR 196); that is, although they continue to appear threatening and dominant over the wisdom of mountains like Orleans, their dispersal is imminent. Nevertheless, the warnings continue to gather, becoming increasingly revolutionary and urgent in tone. An important example is when the Abbe de Seyes (i.e. Abbé Sieyès) prophesizes against the nobles, saying, "Hear, O Heavens of France, the voice of the people, arising from valley and hill, / O'erclouded with power. Hear the voice of vallies, the voice of meek cities, / Mourning oppressed on village and field" (FR 206-8). The connection made between mourning and revolution is especially apt in relation to *Milton*, as Los's attempt at an imaginative intervention in placing the sandal on his head is also noted as a "Signal of solemn mourning." Los's attempt is not ultimately strong enough to overcome the tyranny of Satan. Milton's descent, however, which is the second imaginative intervention described and which is formulated as a work of mourning (in this case, mourning for his mistakes), sets in motion a series of interpretative exertions of the imagination that culminate in revolution. Mourning is thus a helpful indicator of the kind of response that, for Blake, carries the seeds of change.

Although the first book of *The French Revolution* is the only one of the seven extant, Blake is still able to develop his revolutionary concerns using an early version of the prophetic voice found in *Milton*. For Blake, the spirit of the revolution in France was

able to recognize – at least, in its inception – the tyranny in government and Church, and the need for an imaginative intervention capable of subverting such power relations. David V. Erdman cautions that "[h]ow soon Blake came to realize that this new Orc was copying Urizen's book we cannot tell" (316), suggesting that Blake may not have become sceptical of the new regime until as late as 1799, when "the complete dehumanization of Orc at the coup d'état of 18th Brumaire" took place (316). Once Napoleon takes the step towards re-establishing imperial power, Blake is finally able to perceive the corrupt side of the revolutions in France and America. Retrospectively, he revisits his initial assessments of the French and American revolutions, and attempts to separate their revolutionary from their tyrannical elements.

Blake works out his views on the terror of Robespierre through *The Book of Ahania*, in which the character of Fuzon (like Urizen before him) represents the revolutionary fervour Robespierre had embodied. Although he begins with passionate intentions, "on a chariot iron-wing'd / On spiked flames" (A 2:1-2), Fuzon/Robespierre falls victim to the desire for power and control promoted in the ideas that informed the revolution. Having killed Urizen (or so he thinks), Fuzon declares, "I am God [...] the eldest of things!" (A 3:38), echoing his predecessor's own sentiments in *The Book of Urizen*. The minute Fuzon declares his supremacy, Urizen secretly fires a poisoned stone into Fuzon's bosom, emphasizing the turn to tyranny established in Fuzon's triumph. This image can also be read as an inversion of the Bard's inspirational and life-giving entry into Milton's bosom. As a result of the poisoned stone, Fuzon becomes "deform'd" (A 3:43) and is finally nailed to "the accursed Tree of MYSTERY" (A 4:6), symbolizing his assimilation into the indefinite, which is the mode of existence that allows tyranny

best to flourish. Likewise, Robespierre, in his bloodthirsty hunt for all opponents to the revolution, becomes the very thing he first resists. As Erdman suggests, "[t]he Enlightenment had not sufficiently weeded out king-worship and planted a hardier concept of brotherhood and human self-reliance" (417), resulting in a mere reformulation of authoritarian thinking during the Terror. This cycling back demonstrates the regressiveness at the heart of the so-called enlightened revolution. Frye helps to summarize Blake's concerns when he writes:

> And if [the revolution] abolishes tyrants altogether, it can only do so by establishing a tyranny of custom so powerful that the tyrant will not be necessary [...] An inadequate mental attitude to liberty can think of it only as a leveling-out. Democracy of this sort is a placid ovine herd of self-satisfied mediocrities. (66-67)

Horkheimer and Adorno elucidate Blake's concerns, with reference to the Enlightenment and the tendency towards tyranny, when they assert that in Enlightenment "[n]othing is allowed to remain outside, since the mere idea of the 'outside' is the real source of fear" (11). Hence Enlightenment shows itself to be a project of unification by reduction. At its foundation is the objective of constructing an unalterable framework against which all reality may be first contrasted, and then forcibly appropriated by the subject. As Horkheimer and Adorno explain, "[t]he manifold affinities between existing things are supplanted by the single relationship between the subject who confers meaning and the meaningless object, between rational significance and its accidental bearer" (7). This formative stage in Enlightenment contains not a few areas of resonance with the revolutionary project of imaginative interpretation in Blake, as it does with the first ideals

of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which drove the French Revolution. In both cases, the construction of an interpreting subject provides the conditions for the possibility of an escape from tyranny; of the universally unbounded exercise of the imagination; and of a dialogical relationship founded upon the imagination, which eludes the purely social. Yet, in spite of these optimistic beginnings, the rule of tyranny remains inscribed throughout the Enlightened process of disenchantment that leads up to the formation of subjecthood. For, unlike Blake's project of imaginative interpretation, at the root of Enlightenment is a desire for control over others and otherness.

The re-emergence of the irrational from autonomous reason occurs, at first, only gradually. As Horkheimer and Adorno write, "[t]he reduction of thought to a mathematical apparatus condemns the world to be its own measure. What appears as the triumph of subjectivity, the subjection of all existing things to logical formalism, is bought with the obedient subordination of reason to what is immediately at hand" (20). Blake observes a similar trend towards subjection – under the illusion of freedom – in the exile of Urizen from the integration of Eternity. Harold Bloom comments that the central irony of *The* [*First*] *Book of Urizen* is the "constant implicit contrast between what Urizen is and what he was" (906). Although Urizen was at one point "the entire intellect of Man" (906), his desire for supremacy leads him into a radical egotism that quickly becomes tyrannical, and therefore limited. Instead of participating in the imaginative diversity that characterizes Eternity, and which is discoverable in the integrated and multiplicious expressions of the whole human, Urizen establishes a standard against which any given interpretation must be measured. This standard comprises the "Laws of peace, of love, of unity: / Of pity, compassion, forgiveness" (U 4:34-35) that Urizen

announces to Eternity prior to his banishment. These laws become the principles of the doctrine of unity, which Urizen expresses as "One command, one joy, one desire, / One curse, one weight, one measure / One King, one God, one Law" (U 4:38-40). Out of the doctrine of unity emerges the collective consciousness, or society, which acts as the preserver of the status quo. Horkheimer and Adorno share this assessment, suggesting that "[e]verything which is different, from the idea to criminality, is exposed to the force of the collective" (22). Yet there is simultaneously something more destructive at work, for "even the threatening collective is merely a part of the deceptive surface, beneath which are concealed the powers which manipulate the collective as an agent of violence" (22). The dismissive response of Rintrah and Palamabron to Los's defence of Milton expresses this destructive impulse. Their resistance corresponds in complicated ways to the deep entrenchment of what Jerome McGann calls the "Urizenic attitudes" (3) that permeate culture itself. Furthermore, their response represents the dangerous extent to which the divisive poison of the Selfhood has infected the imagination.

The Enlightened subject, falling increasingly under the sway of autonomous reason, which is separated from and set above the flux and interpenetration of the human faculties, thus willingly submits to tyranny. Although it is possible to identify the sites of tyranny in culture on an individual basis, the "Urizenic attitude" runs much deeper. For example, Blake marks out the places of tyrannical influence in his censure of "the Hirelings in the Camp, the Court, & the University" and in Rintrah and Palamabron's accurate condemnation of "Miltons Religion" (M 22:39). More generally, however, Blake's prophecy concerns the thirst for power at the core of every social institution. As Frye observes, "[s]ociety to Blake is an eternally unwilling recipient of culture: every

genius must fight society no matter what his age" (90). Yet the greater, and more engrained, tyranny in society can only be fully articulated in contrast to the glimpses of Eternity caught through the fallen work of the imagination, which is represented by the ongoing construction of Golgonooza. For this reason, and in order to better illustrate the ramifications of Rintrah and Palamabron's resistance to prophecy, I will focus in the next section on detailing the disturbances in the "nether regions of the Imagination."

2.

When Milton enters him, not only does Blake gain insight into the fallen work of the imagination, but "also all men on Earth, / And all in Heaven, saw in the nether regions of the Imagination / In Ulro beneath Beulah, the vast breach of Miltons descent" (M 21:5-7). This second, more widespread opportunity for vision can be understood as a commentary on the poem *Milton* itself, which McGann argues (speaking likewise of all of Blake's Prophecies) affects the reader by "foster[ing] a fellowship of creative spirits" and "encourag[ing] imaginative activity" (21). More specifically, though, the statement is an invitation to the reader at this point in the poem to follow Blake as he "walk[s] forward thro' Eternity" (M 21:14). This invitation revisits the affective purposes first raised by the dynamic of the Bard's song and Milton's response: the poem is designed to rouse the reader's faculties to act. In light of this objective, Blake's observations from his excursion into the nether regions of the imagination represent both the ideal of the "good life," which is the ethical intention motivating Milton's descent, and the ways in which that ideal has been corrupted by tyranny. This investigation will help to establish a

perspective from which the specifics of Rintrah's and Palamabron's response to Los may be understood.

As Blake takes his first steps through Eternity, the narrative point of view shifts briefly from the first person, in which Blake describes Milton "entering my Foot" (M 21:4), to the third person. This shift enhances the prior invitation to readers to partake in Blake's newfound vision by expressing his observations in the conventional mode of a storyteller. Also, by eliminating his subjective voice momentarily from the account, Blake ensures that the reader is given the widest possible range for interpreting the vision. In light of this narrative decision, it is interesting to note the significance that different practices of interpretation hold in this episode. Milton's descent has elicited many diverse responses from the members of "the Divine Family," who populate Eternity. For example, those members who will eventually come to represent Milton's Emanation, and who are together called "Ololon," named after the river that runs through Eden, regret the "wrath & fury & fire" in which they had "Driven Milton into Ulro" (M 21:31-32). Other members, however, who remain nameless save for their association with "the Divine Family," persist in condemning Milton. They entreat Ololon to "Obey / The Dictate!" (M 21:55). This dictate is, on the one hand, to "Renew [the world] to Eternal Life," presumably through their ongoing intellectual activity, and, on the other hand, to abandon any hope of redeeming Milton, for "he goes to Eternal Death" (M 21:56-57). Ololon cannot simply forget her role in the misdeed, however, and laments her past actions, recognizing within herself "the pangs of repentance" (M 21:50).

It is in this context that "all the Family / Of Eden heard the lamentation" of Ololon (M 21:24). Their response to these lamentations underscores the reductive quality

of their interpretative approach: "when the clarions of the day sounded they drowned the lamentations / And when night came all was silent in Ololon: & all refusd to lament / In the still night fearing lest they should others molest" (M 21:25-27). It is suggestive to note the similarities between Ololon's refusal to lament at night and Palamabron's submission to Satan's request to operate the harrow. In both cases, the choice is made to bow to external pressure, rather than to express oneself; that is, passivity trumps activity. Also, if we consider Ololon's decision to silence her mourning at night in light of the imaginative power demonstrated by Los's signal of solemn mourning, her action suggests a deeper culture of oppression at work in Eternity. This suspicion finds additional support in Blake's description of how "Luvahs bulls each morning drag the sulphur Sun out of the Deep / Harnessd with starry harness black & shining kept by black slaves / That work all night at the starry harness. Strong and vigorous / They drag the unwilling Orb" (M 21:20-23). This disturbing representation of labour – insofar as it is at once intensive and enforced – implies a perversion of the kind of labour that is supposed to define the imaginative project in the world of Generation. Instead of the free, communal exercise of the imagination, in which it is possible to be "just & true to our own Imaginations" (E 95), Blake is confronted by several images of subordination: the bulls of Luvah, "the black slaves," and "the unwilling Orb," all of which are dominated by "the starry harness."

Blake's description of the Divine Family in Book the First is particularly problematic because of how he describes the same scene later in the poem, at the beginning of Book the Second. In Book the First, the Divine Family in Eternity appears oppressive, though well meaning, towards Ololon. An example of its conflicted attempts

both to control and comfort Ololon is when "as One Man, who weeps over his brother, / In a dark tomb, so all the Family Divine. wept over Ololon" (M 21:41-42). Although the Divine Family's outward intention is to console Ololon in her lamentations, Blake's comparison of their actions to a live man weeping over his dead brother's body in a dark tomb suggests, first, a reduction of the other (Ololon) to something immobile and insentient, and, second, the enclosure of death around Ololon, symbolized by a tomb. The negative subtext of this image continues throughout the scene, as I explore below. The scene culminates with Ololon's assimilation into the Divine Family, which is compared disturbingly to unification with Jesus. Yet, in Book the Second, Blake uses the image of Ololon's association with Jesus positively as a sign for the apocalypse, and thus for the renewal of the imagination. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the tension between these two descriptions finds some release in the abandonment of the image of the Divine Family after Ololon departs from Eternity, and in a renewed expression of her convergence with Jesus and Albion at the end of the poem.

The Divine Family's entreaty in Book the First that Ololon "Obey / The Dictate" – an act that suggests a retreat from repentance – contributes to the sense that Eternity has become corrupt. A comparison of Leutha with Ololon may be helpful in assessing the behaviour of the Eternals, who in both cases oppose the actions of the solitary subject. In light of Leutha's selflessness in her repentance, and how she functions as a catalyst for a similar imaginative act in Milton, the encouragement of a retreat from repentance in Ololon seems to be an affirmation of Selfhood. Just as the Eternals were able to subvert Leutha's selfless act by imprisoning her in Palamabron's tent, lulled into a dream-state fuelled by her infatuation, so do they attempt to subvert Ololon's redemptive energies

through an appeal to unity. The stirring doxology, which takes place just prior to Los's meeting with Blake, affirms the oneness of "Jesus the Saviour" who "appeared coming in the Clouds of Ololon!" (M 21:60). Superficially, it appears to be a description of Ololon's return into the fold of the Divine Family, who are shown "Uniting in One with Ololon" (M 21:59), and a reassertion of their unity. Yet the fixation upon oneness in this scene becomes alarming, especially when one recalls Urizen's declaration of "One King, one God, one Law" (U 4:40). Also, the reference to "the Clouds of Ololon" recalls similar cloud imagery used to describe the nobles in *The French Revolution*, which Harold Bloom suggests represents "the old order and its failure of vision" (947). Despite the chauvinistic rhetoric of the Divine Family's hymn to Ololon (or perhaps as indicated by it), which culminates with the triumphal promise that "the Divine Vision remains Every-where For-ever. Amen" (M 22:2), the scene is deliberately unsettling. John H. Jones helps to connect the Divine Family's manipulative approach with an expression of Selfhood. He remarks that the "coercive authority implicit in Selfhood is, according to Blake, the real source of error, because instead of several points of view engaged in dialogue, one point of view is monologically maintained as the only acceptable one, and all others are suppressed" (5). It is thus hardly a surprise that Blake undermines this ceremonial expression of unity with his short comment immediately following the hymn: "And Ololon lamented for Milton with a great lamentation" (M 22:3). Although corrupt Eternity attempts to suppress the seeds of imaginative action, Ololon's penitent potential remains intact. To borrow from Jones's language of monologue and dialogue, Ololon's weeping challenges the Divine Family's attempt to assert a monologic discourse. Her

penitent otherness refuses assimilation. This tension ensures that a similar opportunity for imaginative interpretation remains possible in Los's encounter with Milton-Blake.

The return to first-person narration on Plate 22 coincides with the description of Los's entry into Milton-Blake. Blake introduces Los into the scene slowly, without revealing his assessment of Milton-Blake. Instead, when Los first hears about Blake binding on the sandals of Eternity, his response is "indistinct in fear" (M 22:4). This response does not suggest a reductive interpretation or an imaginative one. When Los suddenly descends to Milton-Blake and stands behind him, he is described as "a terrible flaming Sun" (M 22:6). This description emphasizes the inextricable connection between Los and the imagination, the sun being a common symbol in Blake for the imagination, according to Damon (390). The connection also serves to further delay the reader's certainty regarding Los's judgment of Milton-Blake. His alignment with the sun makes it clear that Los is a pure (and purifying) representative of Eternity, unlike some of the other members we have encountered so far. Yet knowledge of whether or not Los will choose to judge in Milton-Blake's favour continues to be withheld from the reader. This narrative technique permits the reader to behold Los standing "in that fierce glowing fire" with the same "terror" and "trembling … Exceedingly with fear" (M 22:7-10) as Milton-Blake.

The significance of this delay is to re-emphasize the centrality of interpretation as an exercise of the human imaginative faculties in every situation, and in particular, in every human encounter. It is important that this scene comes immediately after the totalitarian approach of "the Divine Family" in attempting to assimilate Ololon because of how it differs in its result. Indeed, Los has before him at least three options, and the

delay permits the reader insight into the struggle involved in making the ethical choice. The most obvious options Los has are, first, to hinder Milton-Blake's advance; second, to assimilate Milton-Blake into the greater oneness of the Urizenic atmosphere taking hold in Eternity; or, third, to embrace Milton-Blake, and to join with them in their dialogical subjectivity. The first option is similar to the one proposed by Rintrah and Palamabron. In their fear of Milton's power, they suggest to Los that they "descend & bring him chained / To Bowlahoola" (M 23:17-18), where he can be judged. This submission to social processes, rather than to one's own innate interpretative capacities, is an overt form of reductive interpretation, and the height of passivity. Rather than attempting to imagine the multiple possibilities in which Milton's intentions could be other than destructive, Rintrah and Palamabron choose to capitulate to the status quo. As mentioned, an example of reductive interpretation, though disguised to appear as imaginative interpretation, is the response of the Divine Family to Ololon. This response seems imaginative insofar as it arises, at least at first, out of an actual interpretation. For instance, in response to Ololon's temptation to enter into "the pangs of repentance" (M 21:50), the Divine Family offers Ololon an alternative interpretation. They suggest that what Ololon imagines to be the pangs of repentance is actually a sensation of "this World of Sorrow" (M 21:54). This interpretation elides the intensely subjective quality of Ololon's regret, and instead projects this regret into an objective universal, only marginally connected with her experience. Thus they are able to chalk her "pangs of repentance" up to simply "feel[ing] Pity" (M 21:54). That the interpretation is strongly reductive is not immediately apparent, however, because of how the Divine Family's logic seems inflected by a concern for Ololon. Such inflections are typically imaginative in nature, as they require the

interpreting subject to focus on perceiving the other without falling into the trap of reducing the other to the same. In this case, the Divine Family commits just such a mistake, however, and very quickly reduces the otherness of Ololon completely, assimilating her into its unitary expression in a false Jesus. Fortunately, in Los's encounter with Milton-Blake, he chooses the third option described above – a completely imaginative approach to the other.

By choosing to enter Milton-Blake, Los makes a particular statement about Blake himself. As Los is the representative of the imagination in Blake's mythology, his decision signifies the endorsement of Blake as the major artist of his time, Milton's true successor. Blake's description of how Los's "terrors now posses'd me whole!" and how he then "arose in fury & strength" (M 22:14) signifies the attribution of poetic genius to Blake, as Milton likewise once possessed it. Although Blake does see himself as a successor to Milton, he recognizes that this position is not given to him personally, but only insofar as he represents a certain *kind* of artist. Specifically, Blake sees the urgent need for artists possessing a prophetic imagination similar to Milton's. Damon explains this distinction, noting that "[h]itherto the public had read *Paradise Lost* as a versified account of past history or as an Aristotelean epic; Blake was the first to understand that Milton was trying to say something" (274). Milton's commitment to the Daughters of Inspiration (at least at first, before his deeper commitment to orthodoxy took over) meant that he took the imaginative expressions of the past as generative (or re-generative, in Blake's terminology) sites of further imaginative production. Using the past to read the present, Milton's poetry was an artistic expression in the most thoroughly prophetic sense: an imaginative and prolific interpretation of his own times – in particular, an

interpretation of human relations under political authority, Christian doctrine, and sexual morality. Furthermore, Milton's poetry provided a means for orienting oneself towards the future by encouraging the same open, and therefore ethical, imaginative interpretation in every encounter. Although Milton ultimately failed in this project, Blake's attempt to take up the project once again in *Milton* represents a resumption of the poetic responsibility to "Renew the Arts on Britain's Shore" (E 479).

Los's subsequent speech in lines 15 to 25 supports Blake's original call for a new kind of artist, the "Young Men of the New Age" (E 95). This support is found most expressly in Los's description of himself as "that Shadowy Prophet" (M 22:15). When Blake designates a figure as "shadowy," he is often connecting that figure with the material world. Thus Los's realm of concern is this material world, and, as a prophet, the objective of his concern is to bring about revolution. Los, as the Shadowy Prophet, tells us himself that he "Six Thousand Years ago / Fell from my station in the Eternal bosom" (M 22:15-16), referring to the painful process of the Creation, which tied him to this world in the first place. Los's brief description of his origins reminds Milton-Blake not only of the fall of Albion and his fragmentation, but also of the anticipated awakening of Albion. Los emphasizes this apocalyptic, revolutionary purpose when he declares that "Six Thousand Years / Are finishd. I return!" (M 22:16-17). By entering Milton-Blake, Los affirms that the work of both artists contributes to this purpose; however, Milton and Blake are not the only contributors. By declaring that "every fabric" remains forever, and that "we guard them first & last" (M 22:23), Los affirms the efficacy of art as a revolutionary practice. Every contribution to the advance of culture helps to sustain the potential for revolution.

Los's defence of Milton is thus also a defence of the revolutionary purpose of the artist. He begins his defence after Rintrah's and Palamabron's speech, which I will consider in the final section. In contrast to the signal of solemn mourning that Los performs after observing the chaotic mills of Satan, Los's response to his sons' fear is apocalyptic, and described as "Like the black storm, coming out of Chaos" (M 23:21). As we have already noted, Los's earlier response, though ironic, and therefore imaginative, fails to compel his sons to fulfil their imaginative responsibilities. Palamabron, for example, ignores his father's appeals, and calls down the Great Assembly in order to seek justice for himself. Los's defence of Milton, however, coincides with his offensive against the tyranny in the nether regions of the imagination, and therefore produces an imaginative event with far greater repercussions. After his sons rebuke him, calling him "O mild Parent! / Cruel in thy mildness, pitying and permitting evil" (M 23:18-19), Los responds with a storm – similar to the thunderous activity with which he created the world. Tangentially, it is interesting to note the contrast between this image of the gathering storm and the earlier descriptions of the passive murmurings of the Great Assembly, whose corruption becomes increasingly apparent in this latest vision of Eternity. Their murmurs represent their passive and reductive interpretation of the Bard's song. Los, by contrast, is portrayed as a storm, a desert, and finally a flood, which will together overwhelm the heavens and the earth. Inflecting Los's capacity for judgment in this case, however, is the persistent pity and love he has for his sons (M 23:30). Los's decision to disperse the revolutionary "clouds even as the strong winds of Jehovah" (M 23:31) is also a decision to expand the scope of his imaginative approach to include his sons. He asks them to "be patient yet a little" (M 23:32), prolonging their potential

discussion, and inviting them to participate in his imaginative interpretation of Milton's fall. Los further complicates this process of interpretation when he explains to his sons that the reason he chooses to act on the ancient prophecy about Milton is that "we live not by wrath. by mercy alone we live" (M 23:34). He asks his sons for patience because he knows that imaginative interpretation cannot translate immediately into full acceptance of the other.

The truth of the matter, for Los, is that complete openness to the other will only be possible after the awakening of Albion. In the meantime, however, it is far from necessary to simply subject oneself to "Martyrdoms & Wars" (M 23:49), which are expressions of the Selfhood in the fallen world under the rule of Satan. Rather, Los argues that "We were plac'd here by the Universal Brotherhood & Mercy / With powers fitted to circumscribe this dark Satanic death / And that the Seven Eyes of God may have space for Redemption" (M 23:50-52). This redemption cannot fully be realized until Albion arises, but, for now, it is at least possible to resist the Satanic culture that keeps track of one's sins, and positions condemnation in its various forms like a sword of Damocles over the heads of the oppressed. Los suggests as much when he tells his sons:

> [...] be Patient therefore O my Sons
> These lovely Females form sweet night and silence and secret
> Obscurities to hide from Satans Watch-Fiends. Human loves
> And graces; lest they write them in their Books, & in the Scroll
> Of mortal life, to condemn the accused [...] (M 23:39-42)

Resistance to the Urizenic attitudes of this world, according to Los, occurs through the work of each person's Emanation, which in this context can be understood as the

objective expression of one's inner vision. These objective expressions, which may be, for example, the physical works of art in the world, do not immediately disclose their meanings to "Satans Watch-Fiends." Yet within each one is an expression of "Human loves / And graces," which accumulate in Eternity, as Los promises earlier, in order to ensure that the potential for revolution is always at its highest pitch.

For Blake, expressions of the revolutionary impulse take place repeatedly throughout history; however, often these expressions are premature in their deployment, resulting in a return to the prior tyrannical condition. An example Los cites is "how Calvin and Luther in fury premature / Sow'd War and stern division between Papists & Protestants" (M 23:47-48). This tendency to backslide into tyranny does not mean that the revolutionary impulse should be avoided. As Frye suggests, "[r]evolution is always an attempt to smash the structure of tyranny and create a better world, even when revolutionaries do not understand what creation implies or what a better world is" (67). What is important, as Los tells his sons, is that the revolutionary impulse stays alight, stoked by the kindling of human culture. The danger that revolutionaries face is in the opposing Satanic impulse towards atomization: the reduction of human experience to produce a society more deeply enslaved to the dominant powers. Such reductions occur primarily in the form of an assimilation of human experience and its re-expression within a totalitarian structure. While a present-day example might be found among the accommodative functions of late capitalism, this line of inquiry obviously lies beyond the scope of this study. For Blake, the practice of reductive interpretation can be expressed in the categorizing tendency of his contemporaries. He describes this tendency later in the poem, when he contrasts Eternity with the material world:

But in Eternity the Four Arts: Poetry, Painting, Music,

And Architecture which is Science: are the Four Faces of Man.

Not so in Time & Space: there Three are shut out, and only

Science remains thro Mercy: & by means of Science, the Three

Become apparent in Time & Space, in the Three Professions (M 27:55-59)

In time and space, Blake's society produces the three professions through a reductive interpretation of the eternal arts, resulting in "Poetry in Religion: Music, Law: Painting, in Physic & Surgery" (M 27:60). Based on this description, it is clear that Blake is most concerned with targeting the utilitarian processes implicit in Enlightenment – processes that may be helpfully connected historically, as I have suggested, with the similar accommodative functions found in late capitalism. Horkheimer and Adorno, in a less direct manner, raise the same concern when they suggest that, under Enlightenment, "[a]s long as art does not insist on being treated as knowledge, and thus exclude itself from praxis, it is tolerated by social praxis in the same way as pleasure" (25). If art dares to make claims for knowledge, as all art produced through the intellectual fury of Eternity must, society transforms it into the more socially homogeneous (and, therefore, intellectually impotent) concept of industry. For this reason, the revolutionary energies of art must be hidden "from Satans Watch-Fiends" (M 23:40).

Blake's art itself, and in particular his Prophecies, may serve as the most immediate example of such concealment. McGann discusses Blake's contribution to this revolutionary art when he contrasts living "in" art and living "through" it. He writes that Blake's "art is visionary not because it records but because it induces visions" (5). Blake conceals his revolutionary energies by allowing them only to be released through

imaginative interpretation on the part of the reader. Any attempt to analyze such energies out of his poetry through a reductive, systematizing criticism can only result in an incomplete, and therefore ineffective, expression of the revolutionary impulse. The key to fulfilling (and comprehending) Blake's Prophecies lies in the reader's re-orientation towards imaginative activity; that is, the poem's obscurities can find clarity in the dialogical *rapprochement* of the poem with the reader's own meanings and assumptions. McGann argues this when he notes the similarity of Blake's method to other Romantic writers, such as Shelley or Keats. In all of these cases, he writes, "these poems are precisely designed to foster ambivalent perspectives. [...] Poems like these are silent forms teasing us into and out of our own thoughts" (12-13). This orientation towards the imagination corresponds to an assumption of those "powers fitted to circumscribe this dark Satanic death" (M 23:51).

Los perceives in his sons the breakdown of this imaginative orientation, as well as their increasing submission to the tyrannical methods implicit in reductive interpretation. This perception leads Los to remind Rintrah and Palamabron that their responsibilities include making a "space for Redemption" (M 23:52), which corresponds to maintaining the revolutionary impulse. Los promises that tyranny will be overthrown, although "how this is as yet we know not, and we cannot know" (M 23:53). He sees a growing apathy and cynicism in Rintrah and Palamabron, which he seeks to undercut by citing Milton's "unexampled deed" (M 2:21) as a signal of the imminent apocalypse (M 24:41-42). Milton, Los argues, "is of the Elect, / Who died from Earth & he is returnd before the Judgment. This thing / Was never known that one of the holy dead should willing return" (M 23:56-58). Because of the exceptional nature of this event, Los asks his sons to

"patient wait a little while till the Last Vintage is over" (M 23:59). This request that they delay their condemnations represents an appeal to imaginative interpretation. Los develops this request in the next plate as he works upon his sons' imaginative faculties in order to convince them to "wander not & leave me" (M 24:13), as their brothers had before them.

Los first asks Rintrah to recall "when Amalek & Canaan / Fled with their Sister Moab into the abhorred Void / They became Nations in our sight beneath the hands of Tirzah" (M 24:14-16). This story, according to Bloom, refers to "the falling away of the Gentile nations" (919). Although it is a memory, Los deploys it as a catalyst for inspiration, inviting Rintrah to see his own actions through the imagery of the story. In so doing, Rintrah may observe the connection between his own rash departure and another's subjected nationhood. Los argues, as he clarifies later, that, although Amalek, Canaan, and Moab appeared to be freely choosing to flee (albeit into "the abhorred Void"), in reality, the three siblings were simply acting under the unconscious dictates of tyranny. Furthermore, to flee "into the abhorred Void" can also be understood as a total retreat into egotism. By suggesting that the siblings become "Nations [...] beneath the hands of Tirzah," Los and his sons interpret the event as a symbol of the siblings' complete submission to Selfhood and thus to the tyrannical processes that enable Selfhood to subsist. Los's words to Palamabron, which invite him to recall "the loss of Joseph, and the subsequent captivity in Egypt of the Chosen" (Bloom 919), similarly invite him to interpret any departure from Los and the freedom of Golgonooza, as a flight into slavery. As Los sums up for his sons, "if you flee away and leave your Fathers side, / Following Milton into Ulro, altho your power is great / Surely you also shall become poor mortal

vegetations" (M 24:22-24). He explains this danger in greater detail when he describes the indefinite that exists outside of Golgonooza: "No Human Form but only a Fibrous Vegetation / A Polypus of soft affections without Thought or Vision" (M 24:37-38). Because of the threat such indefiniteness poses, Los needs as much support as possible, and he pleads with his sons to "Arise" and "give all your strength against Eternal Death / Lest we are vegetated" (M 24:34-35). Rintrah and Palamabron, however, remain "unconvincd by Los's arguments," and reductively interpret his appeal as inner division in which "wrath now swayd and now pity absorbd him / As it was, so it remaind & no hope of an end" (M 24:45, 46-47). Their resistance to prophecy and its impact on the imaginative conditions in Golgonooza are the subject of the final section of this chapter.

3.

At the heart of Los's timely prophecy about Milton is a belief in the significance of "the moment." The moment, for Blake, is defined as the "Period [in which] the Poets Work is Done" (M 29:1). Furthermore, "Every Time less than a pulsation of the artery / Is equal in its period & value to Six Thousand Years" (M 28:62-63). This relation helps to explain the conventional quality of Los's suddenly recollected prophecy. In a moment, Los was able to imagine the conditions under which he would be able to interpret Milton's descent in a positive light and express this in the form of a prophecy. The possibility that this prophecy was simply invented is irrelevant, and such an assessment relies upon assumptions about imagination that are clearly reductive. Because it is a living expression of the imagination, created in a moment between pulsations of Los's artery, the prophecy is likewise an expression of the revolutionary impulse. The

association drawn between the moment and six thousand years recalls Los's first declaration after merging with Milton-Blake: "I in Six Thousand Years walk up and down: for not one Moment / Of Time is lost" (M 22:18-19). In the same way that Los, in his capacity as the "Shadowy Prophet," represents the apocalyptic event of revolution, Los's sudden recollection of the prophecy about Milton takes place in a revolutionary moment. Resistance to prophecy, as exhibited by Los's sons, results in part from a disregard for the moment, which gives way to a despairing belief in the impossibility of change.

After Los's first long speech defending Milton, Rintrah and Palamabron descend "to Bowlahoola & Allamanda / Indignent" (M 24:44). These places are located on the borders of the imagination, and are the last bastions against the indefinite. Each location is associated with various aspects of the human body. Bowlahoola, for example, represents the lungs, the heart, and the stomach (M 24:58-59). Allamanda is later described as "the Cultivated land / Around the City of Golgonooza in the Forests of Entuthon" (M 27:42-43). Damon interprets this description to mean that it is "the nervous system of the vegetated man" (17). Another location, Entuthon-Benython, is later added to this pair (M 37:59). Together, Damon writes, "the three [locations] constitute human physiology" (57). The association of these three geographical names with specific aspects of the human body aligns the breakdown in the imagination's work, as symbolized by Rintrah's and Palamabron's refusal to speak with Los further and their departure from him, with a breakdown in the interpretative faculties of the whole human.

Since it corresponds to the lungs, the heart, and the stomach, Bowlahoola represents the visceral aspect of interpretation, which finds expression in the first instance

of perception. These perceptions are subsequently refined by the imagination (in Golgonooza) and are then passed on to Allamanda. Damon defines Allamanda as "the apparatus for giving and receiving communications" (17). In the context of artistic production, it is therefore the site for the public expression of the imagination. The significance of these functions is explained in Blake's description of how "Bowlahoola & Allamanda are placed on each side / Of that Pulsation & that Globule, terrible their power" (M 29:25-26). The pulsations of the artery, which represent the revolutionary moment, and the globule of blood, which represents the space in which one can discover Eternity, correspond to the human being who practices imaginative interpretation. This interpretation operates through the deployment of the two functions that connect the interpreting subject with the world: Bowlahoola, which is the immediate, visceral response of the interpreting subject to the surrounding world, and Allamanda, which is the chief expression of that interpretation in the public sphere. Thus, as Blake indicates, each function operates on the border between the subject and the external world.

Problems arise when either function (or both) becomes separated from the imaginative nexus, represented by the City of Golgonooza. The more Bowlahoola or Allamanda become the primary sites of imaginative work, the more they fall under the influence of the indefinite, external world. It is clear from Blake's descriptions of life in Bowlahoola and Allamanda that the nether regions of the imagination tend in this direction. The nether regions of the imagination, like the human under the sway of tyranny, have become increasingly divided internally. As division increases the capacity for vision in the individual decreases. For example, Blake describes how "Thousands & thousands labour. thousands play on instruments / Stringed or fluted to ameliorate the

sorrows of slavery" (M 24:60-61). This encouraging aspect of art, when deployed alongside an active imagination, is essential to the imagination's dynamic and redemptive relationship with the fallen world. Yet Blake's manner of describing the workers' music, which is played "to ameliorate the sorrows of slavery," suggests an instrumentality typically at odds with the intellectual rigour of Eternity. Although the music is meant to "ameliorate," it is significant to note that it is unconcerned with the attempt to do away with slavery altogether. This possibility that the imagination has so far abandoned its revolutionary vision as to perpetuate slavery is further emphasized in the description of "The crooked horn [that] mellows the hoarse raving serpent, terrible, but harmonious" (M 24:66). This image of the snake-tamer presents a problematic double standard insofar as it suggests that the imagination can simply "mellow" tyranny, or "ameliorate" oppression, while depending upon the continuation of that tyranny for its own existence. Thus, although the description of Bowlahoola implies an awareness of the redemptive objective of the imagination, at least as a palliative for oppression, the outright perpetuation of violence indicates a disjunction between the ethical exercise of the imagination and its engagement with the world. Indeed, the violence can be likened to the violence of the Creation described in the Bard's song, in which each age produces only another "state of dismal woe." The scene in Bowlahoola recalls this sorrow in its production processes, which Blake describes as "Living self moving mourning lamenting & howling incessantly" (M 24:53). Although creation is usually "an act of mercy" (E 563) insofar as it delays a further descent into abstraction and helps to sustain the revolutionary impulse that will result in the apocalypse and reintegration of Eternity, in this case it is only error. Without the accumulation of imaginative acts, all of which go

into the continual building of Golgonooza, the work of Bowlahoola (and Allamanda, though it is described in far less detail) is only division. For this reason, "Bowlahoola is namd Law. by mortals" (M 24:48): instead of providing the liberation found in the forgiveness of sins, which results from the exercise of the imagination, Bowlahoola passes a reductive judgment, separating the good from the bad.

Los follows Rintrah and Palamabron into the winepresses and reiterates his prophecy that "The Awakener is come. outstretched over Europe! the Vision of God is fulfilled" (M 25:22). The Awakener, Milton, will loosen Orc from his chains, signifying the onset of a revolution that will shake Albion free from his reverie. This awakening represents the attainment of the good life, which is the free exercise of the imagination with one another. For this good life to be possible, people must eradicate their Selfhoods. This necessary step is what Los attempts to address when he commands the labourers to "bind the Sheaves" of humanity "in Three Classes" (M 25:26, 27). He then gives directions for where each class is to be sent. On the one hand, "The Reprobate who never cease to Believe, and the Redeemd, / Who live in doubts & fears perpetually tormented by the Elect / These you shall bind in a twin-bundle for the Consummation" (M 25:35-37). This judgment corresponds to the ethical impulse of self-annihilation. Both the Reprobate and the Redeemed are already able to discern their Selfhoods and thereby to annihilate them. On the other hand, Los instructs the reapers that "the Elect must be saved [from] fires of Eternal Death, / To be formed into the Churches of Beulah that they destroy not the Earth" (M 25:38-39). Because this class "cannot Believe in Eternal Life / Except by Miracle & a New Birth" (M 25:33-34), Los instructs the labourers to give them over to their own limitations. That is, the Elect are unable to exercise the imagination;

therefore, they must be given over to the passivity of Beulah and of Christian orthodoxy. Due to the possibility that the members of the Elect, like Satan, will resist the purifying fires of Eternal Death with such indignation that they become tyrannical and thereby destroy the earth, Los recommends that they be given a kind of peace in the Church – a necessary evil. The other two classes, however, have the potential to give up their Selfhoods and return to the intellectual fury of Eternity. Thus Los exclaims that the time has come for the last vintage, and he appeals to the labourers of the winepresses to "Break not / Forth in your wrath lest you also are vegetated by Tirzah" (M 25:58) – a warning against the tyrannical practices Los already perceives among them – and to "rush forward with me into the glorious spiritual / Vegetation; the Supper of the Lamb & his Bride; and the Awakening of Albion our friend and ancient companion" (M 25:60-62). This invitation is a declaration of the apocalypse, and of the imminent return of the good life: an active participation in the nourishing life of the imagination, symbolized by taking a meal with friends.

Unfortunately, the resistance to prophecy runs deep in the fallen world of Generation. After Los's speech, "lightnings of discontent broke on all sides round / And murmurs of thunder rolling heavy long & loud" (M 25:63-64), which recall the earlier similar responses of the Great Assembly to the penitent Leutha, or of the Eternal Audience to the prophetic and inspired Bard's song. In response, Los shows the labourers how they have allowed tyranny to flourish among them, and then he inverts that description to make it available for redemption through imaginative interpretation. He says, "Thou seest the Constellations in the deep & wondrous Night / They rise in order and continue their immortal courses" (M 25:66-67). This statement draws the labourers'

attention to the very image of tyranny in Blake's mythology: the Starry Mills of Satan. Yet the image, Los argues, does not always need to be interpreted as a symbol of abstraction; instead, it can be interpreted as a "Vision of beatitude" (M 25:70). Los, in fact, goes even further, and reclaims the glorious vision of the heavens for his own sons. Now, of the constellations, he says, "These are the Sons of Los, & these the Labourers of the Vintage" (M 26:1). The expressions of tyranny, Los argues, are not innate; they can be re-interpreted, and thereby rendered powerless. Furthermore, resistance to tyranny does not simply have to be defensive; every moment of perception involves the opportunity for imaginative interpretation. He suggests this broad definition of resistance when he remarks that, when "Thou seest the gorgeous clothed Flies" (M 26:2), or, when "thou seest the Trees on mountains" (M 26:7), the one who perceives is beholding the sons of Los. Los intensifies this imagery further when he comments that "we see only as it were the hem of their garments / When with our vegetable eyes we view these wond'rous Visions" (M 26:11-12). Los thereby reminds the labourers of the inextricable connection between the fallen world and Eternity, and of the power of such momentary perceptions. Tyranny is not irresistible; rather, to paraphrase Blake using the words of another prophet of Eternity, "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed" (Lk. 17:6), it would be enough to tear down the entire oppressive system. The connection between the mundane and the visionary is explored in far greater detail in *Milton*, Book the Second, where Blake evokes the irruptive potential of the song of the Lark and the scent of Wild Thyme. Each moment possesses enough power to fuel a revolution, if only the interpreting subject is able to imagine it to be possible. In the following chapter, I will consider the characterization of subjectivity required for such an imaginative

interpretation to take place and the redemptive objective at the heart of this revolutionary ethics.

Chapter III

Dialogical Subjectivity and Artistic Redemption

This chapter will attempt to describe further the nature of Blake's ethics through an analysis of *Milton*, Book the Second. As has already been demonstrated, the approach Blake advances can be best understood as a response to practices of Enlightenment thinking that he saw as contributing to aesthetic, intellectual, physical, and spiritual oppression. In the course of this investigation, I will take up at much greater length the idea, introduced earlier in this study, of the ethical relationship between art, interpretation, and action. In order to do this, I will explore the parallel relationship between the inspirational object, the interpreting subject, and the ethical activity of artistic redemption. These first two topics – the object and the subject – correspond to Blake's attempt to formulate a dialogue capable of orienting itself towards otherness. The third topic represents the practical expression of that orientation. The accounts in Book the Second of Milton's project of self-annihilation and Ololon's attempts to understand and rejoin with Milton are both thought-provoking illustrations of the kind of subjectivity needed for Blake's ethical approach to be effective. Specifically, what is needed is an inwardly communicative subjectivity, which acknowledges the internal multiplicity within a single subject as an image of the "Mental War" in Eternity. For Blake, art promotes this dialogical subjectivity, in part, through the proliferation of interpretative possibilities. The ethical manifestation of these inner dialogues appears in conjunction with the work of self-annihilation. As Milton reveals in his speech on Plates 40 and 41, self-annihilation is closely related to one of the chief themes from the preface of the

poem: "the grandeur of Inspiration" (M 41:2). Inspiration, while acted upon by an interpreting subject, is, of necessity, located in objects. To act upon such inspiration requires a willingness to engage with the otherness of such objects. Inspiration is therefore central to the functioning of ethical interpretation, highlighting the importance of the other in circumventing a descent into Selfhood. An encounter with otherness – whether it is in the song of a Lark, the scent of Wild Thyme, or a difficult poem – has the ability to stop the solipsistic cycle of reducing the other to the same. Furthermore, the call to encounter otherness imaginatively, beginning from such a point of inspiration, resounds in the call to seek imaginative freedom for others. This component of Blake's approach – namely, the activity produced through the ethical interpretation of art – corresponds to art's redemptive energy. Artistic redemption, in the final instance, is the objective of Blake's revolutionary ethics. The sheer potentiality described in the last stanza of the poem expresses the extent to which Blake hopes for redemption.

The second book of *Milton* returns to the story of Ololon, who has since descended into Beulah from Eternity, and continues to weep for Milton. In Beulah, her lamentations draw the attention of the Daughters of Beulah, who are fascinated and unsettled by her display of sorrow – an exceptional event in a world "Where no dispute can come" (M 30:3). Beulah, unlike Eternity, is a place of rest that offers temporal creatures – such as the Emanations – the opportunity to recuperate from the difficult intellectual exertions of Eternity. It provides "a pleasant / Mild Shadow above: beneath: & on all sides round" (M 30:32-33), which limits experience, yet in which "Contrarieties are equally True" (M 30:1). This paradoxical set of conditions in Beulah ensures that the comforting aspect of the Ego is not matched with its will to domination. Because of

Beulah's incapacity for discernment, Ololon's descent is seen as "the Lord coming in the Clouds" (M 31:10), a sight which also causes the Daughters of Beulah to weep. As I discuss in the previous chapter, the problematic association of Ololon and Jesus, under the totalizing rubric of the "Divine Family," is one of the signs of the corruption of the imagination. Yet the reassertion of the association between Ololon and Jesus in Book the Second elicits a positive reading of the image in its new context. The necessity of these two contrary readings, I will show, is evident in the text itself, and in the ethical commitments informing the poem. For now, it is sufficient to note that the most obvious difference between these two scenes is the absence of the Divine Family in Book the Second. This suggests that, while Jesus was evoked in the previous description, he does not appear as the Saviour until Ololon makes her descent to earth. As Harold Bloom suggests, "[t]he descent of Ololon to Beulah is associated with the apocalyptic coming of the Lord, for Ololon is the totality of Milton's achievement, and the function of the poet is to bring about the time of revelation" (923). It is possible that the Daughters of Beulah also weep at the sight of Jesus' coming because of how it signals an end to the maternal calm of Beulah. This reading finds support in the line that follows their reaction: "And the Shadows of Beulah terminate in rocky Albion" (M 31:11). That is, the comfort of Beulah must always give way to revolutionary action demanded by injustice in the material world, symbolized by "rocky Albion." The sight of Jesus' coming indicates just such an intervention: specifically, Ololon's self-sacrificial decision to descend into Ulro.

Ololon's decision starts a chain reaction of revolutionary responses, so that "a wide road was open to Eternity" (M 35:35). These culminate in two confrontations, both of which take place at Blake's cottage in the village of Felpham. The first of these is

between Milton and his Shadow, which represents the lingering effect of Milton's work on the world. Though Satan resists him, Milton is able to fulfil his objective and awaken Albion, though only for a moment, before his "strength failing / Forbad & down with dreadful groans he sunk upon his Couch" (M 39:50-51). The very possibility that Albion could awaken, however, is enough of a warning that "Urizen faints in terror" (M 39:53). As Milton and Satan prepare for battle, Ololon, watching them, misinterprets their actions and believes that Milton's act of self-annihilation will produce only more natural religion. Milton, however, explains what self-annihilation involves and sets before Ololon the choice to do likewise. Casting off her Selfhood, Ololon rejoins with Milton, redeeming them both. This act is then echoed by a scene in which "Jesus wept & walked forth / From Felphams Vale clothed in Clouds of blood, to enter into / Albions Bosom" (M 42:19-21). At this point, Blake returns to his "mortal state" and watches as the world around him fills with signs that the New Age is poised to make its appearance.

1.

Blake uses the description of Ololon's lamentations as a way of exploring the effect of art on an interpreting subject. Ololon descends into Beulah because "It is a pleasant lovely Shadow / Where no dispute can come" (M 30:2-3). As she descends, she weeps "With solemn mourning into Beulahs moony shades & hills" (M 30:5), which is an act that the Daughters of Beulah initially find bewildering. Yet their overall response is one of "affection sweet and mild benevolence" (M 30:7). This response stems from the quality of Beulah itself, which "is a place where Contrarieties are equally True" (M 30:1). This quality differs from that of Eternity, in which "Contrarieties" struggle joyfully with

one another in order "To build the Universe stupendous" (M 30:20). While Eternity concerns itself with activity and newness, Beulah functions as a means of preserving the productions of the imagination. Because it is concerned neither with intellectual advance, as in Eternity, nor with intellectual oppression, as in Ulro, Beulah provides an ideal environment for preservation. This environment is one in which a multiplicity of ideas may be sustained without entering into a dialectic, on the one hand, or a hierarchy of value, on the other; like the subconscious, Beulah permits divergent ideas and impulses to "coexist without affecting each other" (Damon 42). Beulah also has an important connection to poetic inspiration, as revealed in Blake's opening apostrophe to the "Daughters of Beulah! Muses who inspire the Poets Song" (M 2:1).

The relationship between these two functions finds particular expression in Blake's descriptions of the visions "of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon" (M 31:45, 63). In these descriptions, first, of the effect of the birds' song, and, second, of the effect of a flower's scent, Blake shows how the seemingly insignificant activities of each creature gradually collect, resulting in an inspirational event. Both descriptions address the reader directly as "Thou," and begin with an account of an everyday experience. In the first case, Blake writes, "Thou hearest the Nightingale begin the Song of Spring" (M 31:28). This rather mundane occurrence sets off a chain reaction involving the twofold activity of listening and response – in short, of communication. While the Nightingale sings, "The Lark … listens silent; then springing from the waving Corn-field! Loud / He leads the Choir of the Day!" (M 31:28, 30-31). In response to the Lark's song, "All Nature listens silent to him & the awful Sun / Stands still upon the Mountain looking on this little Bird" (M 31:36-37). Nature then responds to what it has heard, as Blake

describes how "loud from their green covert all the Birds begin their Song" (M 31:39). These birds, in turn, "Awake the Sun from his sweet reverie" (M 31:41). The Nightingale then begins his song anew, inviting "every Bird of Song" to attend "his loud harmony with admiration & love" (M 31:43-44). This widening inspiration is composed of several seemingly insignificant acts, which reflect only "the effluence Divine" coursing through the veins of every living creature capable of imaginative expression. Moreover, by calling this event "a Vision of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon" (M 31:45), Blake suggests that inspiration is located in a particular response to experience. The Lark, upon hearing the Nightingale's "Song of Spring," acts on an assumed invitation to participate, which is embedded in the Nightingale's song. As Blake hints near the end of this first description, it is the very medium of song that implies such an invitation to participate; for, every bird that adds its voice to the "Choir of the Day" contributes another "loud harmony" (M 31:44). Furthermore, each new song is not an individual event inspired sequentially by the song before it, like links in a chain. Rather, inspiration is increasingly prolific, beginning with a simple act of the imagination, but with each additional voice, rapidly forming an artistic expression far more meaningful than the sum of its parts. The description that follows of the flowers' scent deepens this image, and helps to solidify the relationship between inspiration and ethics.

Like Blake's description of the Nightingale's song that builds to a choir, his description of the flowers' scent is a meditation on the sheer potentiality of the insignificant. He again begins his description by addressing the reader personally: "Thou percievest [sic] the Flowers put forth their precious Odours! / And none can tell how from so small a center comes such sweets / Forgetting that within that Center Eternity

expands / Is ever during doors" (M 31:46-49). His explanation of the inspirational power of a flower builds upon his notion of the moment, explored near the end of *Milton*, Book the First. There, he explains how "every Space larger than a red Globule of Mans blood. / Is visionary" (M 29:19-20) and "every Space smaller than a Globule of Mans blood. opens / Into Eternity" (M 29:21-22). Insofar as Blake measures space in relation to a sign of human life, the assertion that flowers smell the way they do because their small centre is an entryway into Eternity emphasizes the role that the human interpreting subject plays in giving such scents meaning at all. Blake then goes on to detail the process by which Eternity seeps into this material world through the centre of a flower. Like the song of the Lark, the scent of a flower is a prolific expression – joy begetting more joy. This second description, however, illustrates even more fully the multiple levels of connection that form the growing web of inspiration. For example, when Blake describes the joy that "opens in the flowery bosoms / Joy even to tears, which the Sun rising dries" (M 31:50-51), he recalls the image in the stanza immediately prior of the dawn called forth by the singing "Thrush, the Linnet & the Goldfinch, Robin & the Wren" (M 31:40). By awakening the sun, the birds' song likewise participates in the great "Dance" of the flowers' scents. Indeed, it is interesting to note Blake's comparison of the growing effect of inspiration to a dance. The Wild Thyme and Meadowsweet flowers "Light springing on the air lead the sweet Dance" (M 31:53), in which their scents begin to wake the other flowers. That this task again comprises the twofold activity of listening and response is suggested in Blake's description of how "listening the Rose still sleeps / None dare to wake her. soon she bursts her crimson curtaind bed / And comes forth in the majesty of beauty" (M 31:56-58). The individual descriptions of specific flowers gradually

accumulate, and – as in line 40 of the previous description, which lists several different birds in a row – Blake lists several different flowers in succession. The cumulative effect finishes with the promise that the scents of "every Tree, / And Flower & Herb soon fill the air with an innumerable Dance" (M 31:60-61). Finally, Blake bridges the gap between the affective capacity of flowers on other flowers and the human experience, writing that the scents cause "Men" to be "sick with Love!" (M 31:62). This cumulative approach to description creates a sense of heightened potentiality, and in both descriptions discussed here, implies that there is an apocalyptic aspect in even the smallest spaces of inspiration. The final two stanzas of the poem, in which the Lark and Wild Thyme reappear, also rely upon a cumulative method of description, to the effect of creating a moment of sheer potentiality in the promise "To go forth to the Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations" (M 43:1).

Both descriptions highlight the role of these unexpectedly inspirational figures in awakening those who encounter them: the birds must awaken each other and the rest of nature, while the flowers must awaken other flowers and even human beings. The appeal to this imagery recalls, of course, the description of Milton as the Awakener of Albion. Albion's sleep represents humanity's submission to the oppressive limitations imposed on its experience. Milton, as a revolutionary poet, and Blake, as a prophetic poet, both seek to shake humanity from its self-imposed reverie, and to increase its receptiveness to the visionary. Likewise, the songs of the birds and the scents of flowers contribute to this grand task of waking up humanity by practicing imaginative interpretation. The activity of listening and response – or of communication, more broadly put – necessitates an orientation towards otherness, for instance, insofar as each action requires an interlocutor.

Once a subject is given the task of facing the other, a choice must be made either to reduce the other to the same – thereby limiting the other to that which can be understood by the self – or to attempt to encounter the other with an openness to the other's full potentiality. Because both descriptions detailed above are summarised as visions "of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon," it is possible that Blake intends each image to be an appeal to imaginative interpretation over reductive interpretation. The responses of both the birds and the flowers result in increasingly wide horizons of engagement with the other. In the first case, the birds' song ultimately "thro the day, / And thro the night warbles luxuriant" (M 31:42-43), a condition that signifies ongoing inspiration. In the same way, the "innumerable Dance" of the flowers' scent suggests the potential infinity of the world. Imaginative interpretation is a participation in the realization of this potential – to learn to see the world as "one infinite plane" (M 15:32).

The potentiality of the insignificant depends, furthermore, upon the perceptive relationship of an interpreting subject to the inspirational object. Blake emphasizes this in his use of the second-person singular pronoun for addressing the reader with each description. "Thou hearest" and "Thou perceivest" both imply an active stance of reception on the part of an individual. That each description is also "a Vision of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon" suggests that when Blake says, for example, "Thou perceivest," he really means, "Thou *may* perceivest." To assert the visionary quality of perceiving the flowers' scent as an infinite dance of love is to distinguish between ways of perceiving. The decision to interpret a seemingly insignificant object as inspirational – and thereby to imbue it with significance – is the task Blake lays before his reader. Yet embedded in this interpretative act are the complexities found at each pole of the subject-

object binary. Interpretation requires, on the one hand, an inwardly communicative interpreting subject, which will be explored at greater length in the following section, and, on the other hand, an object of perception capable of inspiring a revolutionary exertion of the imagination. For Blake, this latter aspect of interpretation, the inspirational object, is synonymous with the work of art.

The task of art is to discover these inspirational objects and to bring them before the interpreting subject, creating an opportunity for imaginative interpretation to take place. Indeed, as the various representations of art and artists in *Milton* suggest, the task of artists is to create these inspirational objects in the first place, by likewise interpreting the seemingly mundane world imaginatively. Blake articulates this responsibility when he describes the "Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find / Nor can his Watch Fiends find it" (M 35:42-43). Although he has already defined the importance of "the moment" earlier in the poem, by describing it in terms of a resistance to tyranny, Blake here re-emphasizes its crucial role in his ethics. Although "the moment" is able to evade the assimilating attempts of tyranny, "the Industrious find / This Moment & it multiply, & when it once is found / It renovates every Moment of the Day if rightly placed" (M 35:43-45). This description suggests that at the heart of the artistic resistance to tyranny is the capacity for redemption. Furthermore, it is "the moment" that makes the Lark and the Wild Thyme into inspirational objects. The artists are "the Industrious" who ensure that the imaginative potential of "the moment" is "rightly placed." Also, the suggestion is that, in order to realize its potential, "the moment" must be multiplied, an assertion that recalls the prolific quality of the birds' song and the flowers' scent. Those descriptions are helpful in considering "the moment" again because of their emphasis on

communication. Blake describes how "in this Moment … stands a Fountain in a rock / Of crystal flowing into two Streams" (M 35:48, 49-50). One of these streams courses "thro Golgonooza / And thro Beulah to Eden" (M 35:50-51), while the other one "flows thro the Aerial Void & all the Churches / Meeting again in Golgonooza" (M 35:52-53). The first stream represents an exertion of the imagination; the second represents inspiration, which travels out of Eternity and through the many layers of tyranny built up through history. The inspirational object is given the qualities of "the moment," and thus becomes a messenger. The Wild Thyme, for example, is "Los's Messenger to Eden" (M 35:54), while the Lark "is Los's Messenger thro the Twenty-seven Churches" (M 35:63). In each case, the inspirational object continues to be responsible for inspiring the imagination in others as a work of resistance. Ololon, insofar as she is Milton's Emanation, also becomes an inspirational object and thus a representation for art in the poem. The reaction she inspires in others can thus be taken as indicative of the affective capacity that Blake believes art has.

Blake uses the descriptions of the birds' song and the flowers' scent in order to represent imaginatively the way that the Daughters of Beulah respond to Ololon's descent. Yet the more literal description of their response also highlights the responsibilities of art and the artist in creating sites for imaginative interpretation. In the first place, the exceptional nature of Ololon's descent and lamentation holds the Daughters of Beulah in "mute wonder" (M 30:6). Their silence is tempered with "affection sweet and mild benevolence" (M 30:7), and therefore suggests an openness to Ololon that might have been undermined had the Daughters attempted to express their initial surprise in words. It is significant that when they finally do begin to speak with

Ololon, the Daughters of Beulah only do so by asking questions. Furthermore, their questions reflect their awe at the transformation in reality signalled by Ololon's act. Although their awe is palpable, there is no trace of condemnation or disapproval as they ask:

> Are you the Fiery Circle that late drove in fury & fire
> The Eight Immortal Starry-Ones down into Ulro dark
> Rending the Heavens of Beulah with your thunders & lightnings
> And can you thus lament & can you pity & forgive?
> Is terror changd to pity O wonder of Eternity! (M 34:3-7)

By expressing their openness to Ololon in the form of questions, the Daughters of Beulah position themselves in a communicative relationship to Ololon. They have created the opportunity for Ololon to express herself in turn, and for them to listen.

The descriptions of the birds' song and the flowers' scent indicate that perception must be followed by an expressive response. For the Daughters of Beulah, this response takes the form of lamentations. Indeed, Blake makes it clear that their lamenting results from listening, for "when the Daughters of Beulah heard the lamentation / All Beulah wept" (M 31:9-10). Significantly, in addition to their sorrow over Ololon's plight, their weeping is the result of an apocalyptic vision of "the Lord coming in the Clouds" (M 31:10). The conjunction of these two sensory experiences – in which they "heard the lamentation" and "saw the Lord coming in the Clouds" – offers a way to resolve the tension between this association of Ololon and Jesus and the prior association in Book the First. As I point out in Chapter 2 using the vocabulary advanced by John H. Jones, the totalizing approach of the Divine Family represents a monologic point of view. With the

Divine Family now absent in this scene, the *dialogic* potential of the experience of the Daughters of Beulah emerges. Indeed, the "Vision of the lamentation of Beulah over Ololon" signifies both an aural experience and a visual experience: the Daughters of Beulah thus perceive two expressions coexisting, without an attempt by one to overwhelm or assimilate the other. It is significant that this movement towards dialogue takes place as Ololon descends towards Ulro because, in both cases, it represents the beginning of an orientation towards otherness. As Jones suggests, "Blake calls this embracement of dialogue 'self-annihilation'" (4). Furthermore, Ololon's decision to locate Milton goes against the appeal to totality in the Divine Family, and suggests that she chooses to leave them behind. This too is part of self-annihilation, argues Paul Youngquist, which "for Blake [...] involves the clarification of identity by rejecting false accretions" (562). That Ololon and Christ are subsequently able to find a common objective – the redemption of the imagination – represents an important step towards distinguishing between unity-as-totality and unity-as-accord. Eventually, Ololon and Jesus enter more completely into this latter kind of unity, which signifies a mutual participation in the life of the imagination, rather than a submission to the dictates of a well-intentioned tyrant.

As I have said, this vision of Christ's coming may also signify the end of the maternal calm of Beulah. Yet, despite the fact that she brings with her a sign of their approaching demise, the Daughters still attempt to provide comfort to Ololon. This suggests that, in addition to being open to Ololon herself, they are open to a future that does not include them; that is, to their own annihilation. This selflessness informs their response to Ololon's weeping, which is to weep as well in empathy. Harold Bloom

suggests that "[t]he inhabitants of Beulah are lamenting the descent of Ololon from Eden through Beulah to Generation; they see this as a fall" (923). If this is the case, their weeping remains selfless in its concern for Ololon herself. By interpreting Ololon's descent openly and imaginatively, the Daughters of Beulah begin a dialogue with Ololon involving "a radical interchange between the two contraries of addresser and addressee" that "allows for the transcendence of the boundaries of discourse" (Jones 6).

The connection between dialogical relationship and imaginative interpretation highlights an important aspect of the kind of subjectivity required for this ethical approach to be possible. The conditions necessary for an inspirational object, as examined above, are inseparable from an inwardly communicative subjectivity. This subjectivity is not simply a moral conscience; rather, it consists of an awareness of the inspirational voices that have informed one's interpretative approach, as well as the oppressive influences that have helped to create limitations in one's approach to the world. As Jones explains, with reference to self-annihilation, "[i]nstead of asserting himself by claiming monologic control over discourse, the speaker relinquishes full authority by engaging in a dialogue" (7). Book the Second of *Milton* explores this dialogical subjectivity in two scenarios, both of which demonstrate the close relationship between imaginative interpretation and redemption. In the first case, which I explore in the following section, Milton's attempt to annihilate his Selfhood necessitates the development of imaginative powers of discernment. In the second case, which I explore in the final section, Milton's and Ololon's movement towards reintegration highlights the relationship between the interpreting subject and artistic redemption.

2.

One of the reasons that *Milton* is difficult to interpret is its tendency to depict the same character simultaneously in several different locations. An effect of this method of characterization is to describe the multiple and often conflicting aspects of an individual, each of which influence the interpretative decisions that individual makes. Blake makes brief reference to this notion of subjectivity, for example, in the naming of Ololon. In the heightened reality of the imagination, Ololon is composed of "those who Milton drove / Down into Ulro" (M 21:16-17); yet, to Blake, "Ololon and all its mighty Hosts / Appear'd: a Virgin of twelve years" (M 36:16-17). The "Vegetable Worlds" (M 36:14), which are found in the material world of Generation, are only able to express the true multiplicity of Eternity as multiple manifestations of divided entities, a condition imposed in the first place by Satan's declaration of autonomy. In *Milton*, Blake attempts – despite his "gross tongue that cleaveth to the dust" (M 20:15) – to uncover the diversity within an individual in his discussion of "the Four-fold Man" (M 20:16). Regarding his protagonist, Blake describes how

> Milton stood forming bright Urizen, while his Mortal part
> Sat frozen in the rock of Horeb: and his Redeemed portion,
> Thus form'd the Clay of Urizen; but within that portion
> His real Human walkd above in power and majesty
> Tho darkend; and the Seven Angels of the Presence attended him. (M 20:10-14)

As the Daughters of Beulah sing their visions of lamentation, Blake gives a brief account of the actions of Milton's "real Human" in Eternity. He describes how this aspect

of Milton "oft sat up on the Couch of Death & oft conversed / In vision & dream beatific with the Seven Angels of the Presence" (M 32:1-2). This aspect of Milton is his "Eternal Form, watched over by the Seven Angels" (Bloom 923), which remains behind in Eternity when he departs to search for his Emanation. Blake describes this form as "an Eighth / Image Divine tho' darken'd" (M 15:5-6). Bloom suggests that the Seven Angels of the Presence "are both historical cycles and stages within individual life" (924). Milton's conversation with these aspects of his subjectivity begins with him describing what has taken place thus far: "I have turned my back upon these Heavens builded on cruelty / My Spectre still wandering thro' them follows my Emanation" (M 32:3-4). Lucifer, who is one of the seven angels, responds by instructing Milton on the nature of subjectivity. In his despairing remark about his "Spectre still wandering," Milton indicates his scepticism that there will be a successful resolution to his redeemed portion's quest. Lucifer's instruction, however, provides him with precisely the knowledge necessary for him to cast off his Selfhood and reintegrate with his Emanation.

Lucifer's explanation revolves around the distinction between States and Individuals. States, he explains, are "Combinations of Individuals" (M 32:10), and can be expressed in one of two forms. The Seven Angels are fortunate enough to have been given "a Human Form" by "the Divine Humanity & Mercy" (M 32:14). This form results only when a combination of individuals is created "in Freedom & holy Brotherhood" (M 32:15). Lucifer also implies that their acquisition of "Human Form" was actually a merciful act of redemption from a previously oppressive state, in which they had been "Compelld to combine into Form by Satan" (M 32:12). Their transition from Satanic form to Human form suggests a similar distinction made between the assimilative unity

of the Divine Family over Ololon and the description of the Starry Eight's reintegration near the end of the poem. In this latter episode, the Starry Eight, who are the seven angels of the presence as well as Milton himself, are described reintegrating with Ololon, and becoming "with one accord … One Man Jesus the Saviour. wonderful!" (M 42:10-11). While the insistent unity-as-totality of the Divine Family is ultimately reductive in its aims for control of Ololon, the accordant unity – or "holy Brotherhood" – of the Starry Eight is a kind of friendship founded upon mutual assent. This distinction is suggestive of the ethical pursuit of the good life with and for others, particularly insofar as mutual assent necessitates the common exercise of the imagination.

As described above, the other form for expressing states is much more common, and involves individualities "combind by Satans Tyranny first in the blood of War / And Sacrifice &, next, in Chains of imprisonment" (M 32:16-17). These states "are Shapeless Rocks / Retaining only Satans Mathematical Holiness, Length: Bredth & Highth" (M 32:17-18); that is, they are indefinite. Furthermore, they mistake their qualities for "Gods or Lords" over humanity, instead of recognizing them as the "Servants of Humanity" (M 32:21). Thus implicit in Satan's states is his tyranny. These states attempt to embed themselves in experience, "Calling the Human Imagination, which is the Divine Vision & Fruition / In which Man liveth eternally: madness & blasphemy" (M 32:19-20). Nevertheless, states are only temporary creations – produced as a result of mercy, in the case of the Seven Angels, or out of oppression, in the case of Satan's states – and therefore can "Change: but Individual Identities never change nor cease" (M 32:23). Furthermore, states are "Created to be Annihilated" (M 32:35), which is the process by which the Eternal Form may surface and thereby be "triumphant over Death / And Hell &

the Grave" (M 32:28-29). The task set before Milton, and also before all those who seek freedom, is to "Judge then of thy Own Self: thy Eternal Lineaments explore / What is Eternal & what Changeable? & what Annihilable!" (M 32:30-31). The angel also gives clear advice in discerning what is eternal when he says, "The Imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself" (M 32:32). This brief description of the primary task of the interpreting subject contextualizes the ethical approach advanced by Blake in *Milton*: to interpret otherness imaginatively means perceiving the individual through its distorting states. The instruction Milton receives from the Seven Angels of the Presence helps him in his two encounters with aspects of his subjectivity. The first encounter consists in his attempt to annihilate his Selfhood. The second encounter, which I will explore in the final section of this chapter, is the closing account of his reintegration with Ololon, and the expression of Milton's artistic redemption. In both instances, the description of Milton's subjectivity is complicated by the multiplicity of his internal voices. Although, in Eternity these might be integrated in a single individual, in the material world they are expressed as separate entities.

Because of this separation of aspects in one's subjectivity, discerning between states and the individual becomes particularly difficult. An example of this difficulty is found in the extended episode outside of Blake's cottage in Felpham. Ololon has descended to the cottage, and Blake begins to talk with her about Milton. Their brief discussion is significant because of how it reasserts the primacy of the everyday ethical engagement. As Paul Youngquist remarks, "Ololon confronts Blake as something *other*, a being *in* the world not normally *of* it" (568, emphasis original). Yet Blake's response is kind and inviting, as he tells her to "fear not to enter into my Cottage" (M 36:28) and

asks her "What is thy message to thy friend" (M 36:29). This scene reminds us, before plunging us once again into the thick of Blake's complex allegory, that "[w]hat Blake needs and works to construct in *Milton* is a hermeneutics that reinforces rather than violates" "the creative relation between individual and world" (Youngquist 562). As Emmanuel Levinas famously states in his assertion of ethics as a first philosophy, "'The true life is absent.' But we are in the world" (33). In the same way, Blake inserts this short episode to recall the commonplace setting of these apocalyptic events; ethical activity can take place in as mundane an occurrence as a meeting between two people. Blake develops this incident prophetically in the plates that follow, describing on the level of the imagination the real stakes involved in such a meeting.

In an inversion of Blake's kind invitation to Ololon, Milton's Shadow also hears her "anxious thought," and selfishly takes it as an invitation for him to approach her. As he comes before her, Blake describes Milton's Shadow as "condensing all his Fibres / Into a strength impregnable of majesty & beauty infinite" (M 37:6-7). This exaggerated display of strength recalls the earlier actions of Satan in Eternity, and signifies to Blake that Milton's Shadow is, in fact, "the Covering Cherub" (M 37:8). As Damon suggests, "[t]he ultimate meaning of the Covering Cherub is the Selfhood … that self-seeking which is the root of all the Christian errors" (93). Yet Blake is able to use his powers of discernment to perceive "the outline of Identity, in the Selfhood deadly" (M 37:10). Obscuring this identity, which represents Milton the individual, is "an outside which is fallacious!" (M 37:9). The states that envelope Milton's individuality are "The Monstrous Churches of Beulah, the Gods of Ulro dark / Twelve monstrous dishumanizd terrors Synagogues of Satan" (M 37:16-17). In Milton's Shadow, Blake perceives the details of

Milton's involvement with tyranny: a perverse association of religious and intellectual oppression.

As Milton's Shadow descends to meet Ololon, he once again collects "all his fibres into impregnable strength" (M 38:5), further obscuring any glimmer of identity that might still be evident. This description emphasizes that this Milton is the tyrannical spectre that the poet John Milton left behind when he died – the lingering effects of his various capitulations to tyranny in his own life and in his writing. Milton in his Eternal Form knows that his "Spectre still wandering thro' [the Heavens] follows my Emanation / He hunts her footsteps thro' the snow & the wintry hail & rain" (M 32:4-5). Yet Milton's "Redeemed portion" (M 20:11), which is that aspect of his subjectivity that responds to the Bard's song and descends to redeem his Emanation, now also accompanies the spectre, though it is not aware of him. Once he descends to Felpham, Milton's spectre becomes aware of the resisting multiplicity within him, which comprises the redeemed Milton and Blake. Blake describes this recognition when he writes of how "The Spectre of Satan stood upon the roaring sea & beheld / Milton within his sleeping Humanity! … loud roll his thunders against Milton / Loud Satan thunderd, loud & dark upon mild Felpham shore" (M 38:9-10, 13-14). By describing Milton's spectre as the "Spectre of Satan," Blake underscores that this aspect of Milton is an expression of the Selfhood, and must therefore be annihilated. As the spectre howls at Milton, Blake describes his own perspective from within "Satans bosom" (M 38:15). In joining with Blake, Milton involves Blake in his oppressive past. This involvement is crucial for Blake to redeem Milton, as the work of imaginative interpretation necessary for

redemption requires the ability to discern between Milton's spectre – a Satanic state – and Milton the individual.

Standing within Milton's spectre, Blake says that he "beheld its desolations! / A ruind Man: a ruind building of God not made with hands" (M 38:15-16). From this perspective, Blake describes a scene of oppressive labour in which Satan's "Angels & Emanations / Labour" (M 38:20) and where Jerusalem – a character regularly aligned with liberty – is "bound in chains" (M 38:27). It is significant that Blake makes repeated reference to the "stupendous ruins / Arches & pyramids & porches colonades [sic] & domes: / In which dwells Mystery Babylon" (M 38:21-23). These ruins are evidently the remnants of human culture's great architectural achievements. By locating the symbol of corruption in the centre of an inspirational space, Blake evokes the practice of ethical discernment – a crucial aspect of imaginative interpretation. Milton's spectre is "ruind," a quality that suggests a once-whole condition. The implication is that Milton's inspirational potential fell into ruin because it has become overrun by the agents of tyranny, as symbolized by the "Mystery Babylon." This perception can lead to redemption, as Milton explains to Satan, through self-annihilation.

The options that Milton has before him are either "thee [Satan] to annihilate / And be a greater in thy place, & be thy Tabernacle / A covering for thee to do thy will" (M 38:29-31) or to "come to Self Annihilation" (M 38:34). In other words, Milton can either choose to enter into the cycle of oppression symbolized by Satan or he can abandon his desires for control and power in exchange for the freedom of unfettered imaginative expression in community. By advancing these options, Milton indicates the difference he discerns between the lingering spectre of his past evils and his current Self: the tyrannical

actions of the first show that aspect to be of the state of Satan, while the second is the individual Milton, which can "never change nor cease" (M 32:23). The law of the Satanic state, Milton remarks, "is to impress on men the fear of death; to teach / Trembling & fear, terror, constriction; abject selfishness" (M 38:38). Indeed, the Selfhood finds its source in the Satanic state. For Milton to annihilate Satan would therefore signify the imposition of Milton's will and control over Satan, meaning that in "annihilating" this tyrant, he would simply take his place. The cycle of tyranny is precisely this renewal of control over others, and resonates with Blake's concerns over the tendency to failure in revolutions. As Northrop Frye suggests, "the world is so constituted that no cause can triumph within it and still preserve its imaginative integrity" (217). Breaking out of the cycle of tyranny requires an imaginative act completely incompatible with the frameworks of experience entangled in the Enlightenment project.

Evading the trap that Satan has set for him as he roars belligerently from the sea, Milton resolves to practice the "Laws of Eternity" which are "that each shall mutually / Annihilate himself for others good, as I for thee" (M 38:35-36). The "Laws of thy false Heavns" (M 38:33) are designed to maintain oppression through the creation of reductive frameworks of interpretation, ensuring that its subjects remain, like Urizen before Los freed him with an Imaginative act, "in chains of the mind lock'd up" (M 3:6). Milton's approach, however, "is to teach Men to despise death & to go on / In fearless majesty annihilating Self, laughing to scorn / [Satan's] Laws & terrors" (M 38:40-42). This approach is emphatically active, insisting that people "go on," rather than falling into the sleepy death of passivity. Milton then says, "I come to discover before Heavn & Hell the Self righteousness / In all its Hypocritic turpitude, opening to every eye / These wonders

of Satans holiness shewing to the Earth / The Idol Virtues of the Natural Heart, & Satans Seat" (M 38:43-46). His approach to self-annihilation consists, therefore, in an active process of discovery – meaning, in this case, both an exploration and a disclosure. Notably, this process takes place within a communal context, as he pledges to open "to every eye" and to show "to the Earth" the truth about Enlightenment thinking. This commitment recalls the communal aspect of "the good life," which is the pursuit of imaginative freedom with and for others.

Satan's response is again reminiscent of his earlier outburst at the reaction of the Great Assembly. In a new declaration of supremacy similar to that episode, Satan says to Milton, "I am God the judge of all, the living & the dead / Fall therefore down & worship me. submit thy supreme / Dictate, to my eternal Will & to my dictate bow" (M 38:51-53). This declaration defines the Satanic state: to insist upon another's submission to one's own will. His subsequent insistence that "others tremble & bow / Till All Things become One Great Satan, in Holiness / Oppos'd to Mercy, and the Divine Delusion Jesus be no more" (M 38:57-39:2) confirms this definition. Furthermore, it emphasizes the paradox at the heart of the Satanic state; namely, that, in demanding reductive interpretation from its subjects for the purpose of maintaining their position, the tyrant must likewise practice reductive interpretation. The tyrant must do this in order to maintain its unitary status as a totality, which is the ultimate example of a reduction of otherness to sameness.

The individual Milton's response to his spectre is much like Blake's art: an imaginative expression at once visual and linguistic. Surrounding Milton up to this point have been the Starry Seven, which are the protective shadows of the Seven Angels of the Presence as they appear outside of Eternity. As soon as Satan makes his final boast, they

erupt into "a mighty Column of Fire / Surrounding Felphams Vale, reaching to the Mundane Shell" (M 39:8-9). They are also compared to "the clear Sun" (M 38:5), which is an image that suggests the imagination, as it has elsewhere. Accompanying this exuberant image are the voices of the Seven Angels, which call out for Albion to awake and "reclaim thy Reasoning Spectre. Subdue / Him to the Divine Mercy, Cast him down into the Lake / Of Los" (M 39:10-11). Based on these imperative commands, Blake is able to describe self-annihilation. Tangentially, it is important to note that this act cannot be understood as a practice, *per se*, in the sense of a repeatable series of operations resulting in self-annihilation. If this were the case, self-annihilation would only perpetuate the existing systems of oppression. Instead, the call of the Seven Angels provides a model for self-annihilation, insofar as it comprises both reintegration and self-sacrifice.

In calling for Albion to awake, the Seven Angels evoke the ideal of imaginative freedom. Milton, insofar as the Seven Angels represent aspects of himself, directs his imagination towards his spectre; the accompanying images of fire and sun support this reading as well. The process of discernment, and, more particularly, the articulation of the opposition between Milton and his spectre, results in a temporary separation between them. This separation is also unavoidable in light of the divisive conditions inherent in the material world. Yet Milton's objective, according to the Seven Angels, is to reclaim this "Reasoning Spectre" and to "Subdue / Him to the Divine Mercy" (M 39:10-11). Although his objective seems to resonate with the assimilating objectives of tyranny, Milton's decision first to "reclaim" his spectre helps to explain the second part of his aim without condemning him as a hypocrite. The evocation of "Divine Mercy" recalls

Blake's belief in the centrality of forgiveness. As Damon suggests, "the Forgiveness of Sins" consists in "tak[ing] people for what they really are, distinguishing the individual from the state he may be in" (141). To "Subdue" his spectre to mercy, therefore, suggests Milton's attempt to discern whatever individuality might lie at the heart of his spectre. As he proclaims earlier, his goal is to "Explore [his spectre] in all its Selfish Natural Virtue & put off / In Self annihilation all that is not of God alone" (M 38:47-48). Reclamation is an attempt to redeem those aspects of the spectre that can still be redeemed, and to cast off the rest.

The process of self-annihilation that Milton undertakes is thus distinguishable from reductive interpretation because of its concern over discerning the difference between states and individuals. This new way of seeing enables Milton, on the one hand, to locate frameworks that perpetuate tyranny through the reduction of experience and, on the other hand, to discover sites requiring an orientation towards otherness. In his spectre, Milton sees the tyrannical qualities of "Self righteousness" and "Hypocritic turpitude." His spectre insists upon obedience and hypocritically uses cruelty to force others to submit to his code of "Moral Virtue" (M 40:21), which Blake calls "Religion hidden in War" (M 40:20). Self-annihilation, as the "clarification of identity by rejecting false accretions" (Youngquist 562), is a discernment of reductive tendencies, and a reaffirmation of one's multiplicious identity. Yet, because Milton has not reached complete integration, his imaginative venture of casting off the Satanic within him falters. This tension is symbolized by the description of Albion awakening, and then stumbling. As Blake describes, although Albion "strove to rise to walk into the Deep," eventually, "strength failing / [He] Forbad & down with dreadful groans he sunk upon his Couch"

(M 39:50-51). In this myth, Blake again emphasizes the inextricability of the communal from the ethical commitment to the free exercise of the imagination. Milton comes face to face with this question of the communal in his encounter with Ololon. If his delineation of Milton's Shadow represents the location of a framework of tyranny to be cast off, Ololon's scepticism about Milton represents a site of otherness to which Milton has the opportunity to respond imaginatively. Her questions draw Milton the individual into imaginative engagement with her otherness, leading to a final twofold movement of self-annihilation and redemption.

3.

It is difficult to determine whether Ololon is the Sixfold Emanation of Milton throughout the poem, or whether she becomes this Emanation only just prior to being reabsorbed into the Eternal Milton. Of course, much of this difficulty is solved when we approach the matter without extensive recourse to the conditions of space and time, as in the world of Eternity. As Mary Lynn Johnson notes, Ololon operates "on multiple planes of reality" (246). Among these planes are the negative manifestations of Ololon as the wrathful crowd that chase Milton out of heaven and as the judgmental assembly "surrounding Milton/Mount Sinai in the 'Desarts of Midian'" (246). As is the case with Milton, these multiple planes are each discrete manifestations, which are not necessarily even aware of each other. Indeed, Ololon's first addresses to Milton suggest that, in descending to the material world, she has forgotten her former relationship to the poet. It is not until much later, when Milton reminds her of her responsibility to "Obey thou the Words of the Inspired Man" (M 40:29) that she exclaims: "remembrance / Returns upon

us! are we Contraries O Milton, Thou & I" (M 41:34-35). Prior to this point, Ololon knows only the urge to repent. In Eternity, she accomplishes this by finding "Miltons Couch," surrounded by "Eight / Immortal Starry-Ones" who are the Seven Angels of the Presence and Milton, and then "falling down / Prostrate before the Starry Eight asking with tears forgiveness" (M 35:29-30, 31-32). In the world of Generation, however, this act of repentance translates into the twofold interpretative activity of perception and expression performed elsewhere. That is, Ololon must first observe the complicated situation of Milton's multiplicious subjectivity, and then articulate the framework – imaginative or reductive – that allows her to understand it. An imaginative framework is one oriented towards otherness, and is therefore both contingent and open-ended; a reductive framework is rigid, enforcing conformity to its already-existing limits. Indeed, it is not until she comprehends her true self as Milton's Sixfold Emanation that her repentance is resolved, as she discovers complete forgiveness in her and Milton's reintegration into the "One Man Jesus the Saviour" (M 42:11). Unlike the oppressive unity of the Divine Family, which used the figure of Jesus as a vehicle for restraint, the unity of Ololon and Milton is created in "the Fires of Intellect," producing a community in "accord" (M 42:9, 10). Yet Ololon's interpretative practice suffers a breakdown between observation and expression.

Although she is able to discern the multiplicity of Milton's subjectivity, Ololon is unable at first to formulate an ethical response. Thus she can see how Milton "strive[s] upon the Brooks of Arnon" with Urizen (M 40:4), but she misapprehends "Self annihilation" as simply "giving thy life to thy enemies" (M 40:8). In this example, her observation of this situation is technically accurate: she discerns the "impossible

absurdity" of the "Natural Religion" advanced by Enlightenment figures such as "Voltaire & Rousseau: … Hume & Gibbon & Bolingbroke" (M 40:12-13). Her concern, however, that Milton's self-annihilation will harm "the Children of Jerusalem / Lest they be annihilated in thy annihilation" (M 40:15-16), indicates her failure to perceive Milton's subversive objectives. This failure stems from the impulses of her Selfhood, which will eventually be discovered and cast off "into the depths / Of Miltons Shadow" (M 42:5-6). Although Ololon repents having driven Milton from Eternity, she continues to interpret otherness somewhat reductively. Because she interprets Milton's self-annihilation as a submission to tyranny, she assumes that Milton has inadvertently become one of "the causes & promoters" (M 40:10) of the Enlightenment project.

Milton's extended speech addresses Ololon's misunderstandings, and exhorts her to self-annihilation as well. He begins by responding to her most pressing concern, saying: "All that can be annihilated must be annihilated / That the Children of Jerusalem may be saved from slavery" (M 40:30-31). Ololon had assumed that the Children of Jerusalem would become endangered by Milton's annihilations, not realizing that the minds of the children had already been enslaved by Enlightenment thinking. Furthermore, self-annihilation, Milton explains, is not a capitulation to tyranny, but a way to redeem that which has been divided by "the Reasoning Power in Man" (M 40:34). This "false Body" (M 40:35), which prolongs the unnatural separation of the human faculties, is composed of the reductive states of oppression, imposed from without through Enlightenment thinking. Insofar as it is concerned with the maintenance of its own power over individuals, the false Body represents the Selfhood. Milton also likens the Selfhood to "an Incrustation over my Immortal / Spirit" (M 40:35-36), which can only be

annihilated "by Self-examination" (M 40:37). His evocation of "Self-examination" is important because it helps to explain Ololon's failure to interpret Milton's actions imaginatively. Because she does not know who she truly is – the Sixfold Emanation of Milton – Ololon cannot hope to recognize the Selfhood that impedes her vision of Milton. Thus, Milton insists that imaginative interpretation must begin, in the first instance, with the imaginative interpretation of oneself. This statement makes sense in light of Blake's overall ethical commitment to the pursuit of the good life with and for others. If the good life is to participate communally in imaginative freedom, openness to the otherness one finds in oneself is imperative. In the remainder of his speech to Ololon, he describes what such practices of openness might resemble.

Overall, self-annihilation consists of discerning reductive frameworks that tend to be obscured, and to overcome these with imaginative frameworks. Hence Milton seeks

> To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour
>
> To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration
>
> To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton from Albions covering
>
> To take off his filthy garments, & clothe him with Imagination (M 41:3-6)

These objectives emphasize the central role Enlightenment thinking plays in Milton's critique. In opposition to each example of reductive interpretation, Milton posits an alternative requiring the exercise of the imagination. Furthermore, throughout Milton's speech there is a repeated appeal to activity, whether it be in "cast[ing] off" or in advancing a positive replacement. This appeal builds upon Milton's promise that, in all of these deeds, he "come[s] in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration" (M 41:2). As indicated earlier, the appeal to the inspirational object or event is the first step in an

orientation towards otherness. Thus each objective Milton advances represents a repudiation of selfishness and an affirmation of the other.

When Ololon finally recognizes herself as "the Six-fold Miltonic Female" (M 41:30), and casts off her Selfhood, her and Milton's redemption is described with imagery previously used for describing the inspirational event. Bloom explains Ololon's recognition as an awakening "to the understanding that she and Milton are truly Contraries, who must war the wars of life, the creative struggles of Eden" (927). It is significant that this is an awakening for Ololon, as Milton's task all along has been one of awakening those caught in the slumber of Enlightenment thinking. In being awakened through Milton's inspirational speech, Ololon is returned to herself. As Milton indicates in his speech, Ololon's realization of her inextricable connection to Milton is only possible through "Self-examination." This examination shows Ololon the ways in which her Selfhood has participated in oppression, and leads her to become "a Double Six-fold Wonder" (M 42:4), which signifies the separation of her Satanic state from her individual identity. Blake then describes how Ololon's state "fled into the depths / Of Miltons Shadow as a Dove upon the stormy Sea" (M 42:5-6). This brief illustration represents the ongoing possibility for hope in every situation, and is a model for the imaginative openness found in an ethical orientation towards otherness.

With her Selfhood cast off, Ololon can finally enter into Milton and become one with him. Bloom quite rightly points out the sexual dimension of this imagery, in which Ololon's "shriek / Dolorous" (M 42:3) represents both "the departing virginal" and "a shriek of birth" (927). Yet more relevant to the matter of inspiration is the description of Ololon descending "In clouds of blood, in streams of gore" (M 42:8). A possible

explanation for this disturbing image may be found in the earlier motif of "the moment." If "A Moment equals a pulsation of the artery" (M 28:47) and, more importantly, "every Space larger than a red Globule of Mans blood. / Is visionary" (M 29:19-20), then the description of Ololon's bloody descent can symbolize a profoundly inspirational event. The image represents the exuberance of Ololon's response to Milton. Having understood imaginatively – in a moment – her role in promoting imaginative freedom, Ololon takes the moment "& it multiply" that it may go on to "renovate[] every Moment of the Day" (M 35:45-46). Her own redemption has begotten the desire to redeem. Yet this desire is not a cover for reducing the other to the same; rather, it is the necessary consequence of openness to the other. Imaginative interpretation enables Ololon to discern between states and individuals, and thus to emphasize the priority of the individual. Ololon descends and reunites with Milton, becoming, in turn, "One Man Jesus the Saviour" (M 42:11). As an inspirational event, Ololon's descent also provokes Jesus to walk forwards "From Felphams Vale clothed in Clouds of blood, to enter into / Albions Bosom" (M 42:20-21). This Jesus is described as wearing "a Garment dipped in blood" (M 42:12). Bloom suggests that this Garment is "at once redemption and imaginative expression, a garment woven in the warfare of six thousand years of fallen history" (927-28), referring to Blake's comment that the garment "namd the Woof of Six Thousand Years" (M 42:15). The motif of six thousand years again indicates the imagery's relationship to revolution. Like the widening scope of inspiration in the birds' song or the flowers' scent, the growing effect of Ololon's sudden imaginative recognition of herself elevates the potentiality for successful revolution to a heightened pitch. Just as the Four Zoas sound

their trumpets, however, Blake is struck with terror and falls "outstretched upon the path / A moment," saying that "my Soul returned into its mortal state" (M 42:25-26).

Blake's return to the everyday world of experience is an invitation to the reader to participate in the imaginative vision just encountered in *Milton*. Significantly, the moment – and it all occurs expressly in "a moment" (M 42:26) – that Blake returns to himself, we are told that "the Lark mounted with a loud trill from Felphams Vale / And the Wild Thyme" (M 42:29-30). Inspirational objects surround Blake, as they always have, but now Blake – and the reader, by extension – has the ability to perceive these objects, and to interpret their significance imaginatively. To the Lark and Wild Thyme, Blake now adds a third site of inspiration when he describes how "Los listens to the Cry of the Poor Man" (M 42:34). In the same way that the Lark had to be listened to, and the scent of Wild Thyme inhaled, the cry of the poor demands an imaginative interpretation. Such an interpretation would begin by listening to the cry of the poor man with unprejudiced ears; discerning through the states imposed upon him by a cruel economic system in order to discover the individual. Moreover, upon discovering the individual, a response will be required. For Los, this response manifests itself as a "Cloud / Over London in volume terrific, low bended in anger" (M 42:34-35). In light of what Los represents as the "Shadowy Prophet," his thunders express the threat of revolution that he levels against an indifferent culture. He assures us that the "Wine-presses & Barns" of Rintrah and Palamabron "stand open" (M 42:37) in preparation "To go forth to the Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations" (M 43:1).

Blake's cumulative vision also demands a response from the reader. We have been taught to see the world in a grain of sand and encouraged to spread this vision, yet

the lingering "Cry of the Poor Man" haunts the promise of revolution. To seek imaginative freedom for oneself and for others has been Blake's objective from the beginning of the poem, as indicated by the Preface's quotation from the Book of Numbers: "Would to God that all the Lords people were Prophets" (E 96). Yet this ethical pursuit cannot be separated from the material conditions that make the exercise of such imaginative freedom possible. The task of discovering the inspirational significance in the mundane objects and events of everyday life involves the discernment between states and individuals – a discernment that leads to socially impacting imaginative interventions. Blake expounds upon this material concern pervasively throughout his work; however, an analysis of this important next stage in formulating a workable ethics of imaginative interpretation based on Blake's thought is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In this study, I have sought to define specifically the nature of the interpretative approach that Blake advances in *Milton*. Furthermore, I have highlighted the ways in which Blake believed his approach could resist the oppressive frameworks imposed by Enlightenment thinking. The imagination hardly seems a strong foundation upon which to build a theory for social justice; however, for Blake, only its expression in art can fully represent the exercise of freedom. The communal pursuit of imaginative freedom further signifies that the revolution Blake seeks is, like the world of Eternity, a living entity composed of individuals participating in a continuing project of self-annihilation and redemption.

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Glossary

Albion	The personification of humanity as fallen victim to the divisive impulse of selfishness.
Beulah	A place of rest that offers temporal creatures – such as the Emanations – the opportunity to recuperate from the difficult intellectual exertions of Eternity.
Emanation	The personification of the objective expression of one's inner vision.
Eternity	The level of existence that coincides with the ideal expression of the imagination. Often used interchangeably with "Eden."
Generation	The material world characterized by ephemerality and transience, in which people live out their actions physically.
Golgonooza	The symbol for the imagination as a work of resistance against the reduction of Ulro. It is a City that also corresponds to the human body.
Los	The personification of the poetic impulse in humanity.
Ololon	Milton's Emanation, and the character chiefly responsible for Milton's exile from heaven. Also the name of a river in Eden.
Palamabron	Los's son, and the personification of pity. His task is to facilitate reconciliation between divided entities.
Rintrah	Los's son, and the personification of prophetic wrath. His task is to seek justice for the oppressed.
Satan	The personification of Selfhood, which is the state that arises from egotism.
Ulro	The world when perceived reductively in abstractions. It is the manifestation of the world under the delusions of tyranny, the chief of which is the falsehood that oppression is natural.